NATION

ISRO satellite to enhance India's surveillance power

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

FPIs pump ₹4,452 cr into Indian equities this week

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Sinner to take on Alcaraz in titular clash

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

روزنامہ سالار بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 18 MAY 2025 | SUNDAY | BENGALURU | 19 DHU'L-QI'DAH, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 134 | Pages: 8

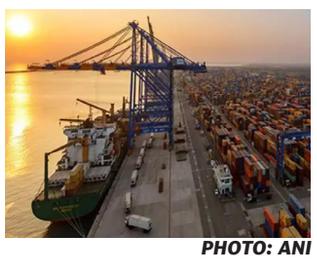


PHOTO: ANI

INDIA CURBS ENTRY OF IMPORTS FROM BANGLADESH

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

India has restricted the entry of several Bangladeshi consumer goods through land transit points in the Northeast, allowing ready-made garments (RMG) only via Kolkata and Nhava Sheva sea ports. The move, effective immediately, affects items like plastics, wooden furniture, processed foods, cotton waste, and carbonated and fruit-flavoured drinks.

The decision follows Bangladesh's continued restrictions on Indian exports via land customs stations (LCS) and integrated check posts (ICP) along the Northeastern border. Despite India's previous openness, Dhaka reportedly halted Indian yarn exports on April 13 and restricted rice shipments from April 15.

India cited these restrictions, high transit charges, and limited market access for Northeast-manufactured goods as key concerns. Nearly 93% of Bangladesh's USD 700 million annual RMG exports to India enter via land ports, meaning the new directive will significantly impact Dhaka's trade.

India has 11 trade points in the region with Bangladesh. Officials said the move supports 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and aims to boost local manufacturing in the Northeast.

The restrictions also follow strained diplomatic ties after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled Dhaka amid political unrest. —*PTI*

7 MPs to carry anti-terror message to world

Congress fumes as Centre names Tharoor in the delegation despite not being nominated

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

In a show of national unity following Operation Sindoor, the Indian government will dispatch seven all-party delegations to key partner countries to convey its firm stance of zero tolerance against terrorism.

The delegations include leaders from both the ruling NDA and the opposition INDIA bloc. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor and DMK's Kanimozhi will join BJP leaders Ravi Shankar Prasad and Sanjay Jha in leading the missions. Others leading delegations include NCP-SP's Supriya Sule, BJP's Baijayant Panda, and Shiv Sena's Shrikant Shinde.

The outreach aims to present a united Indian position globally—particularly to UN Security Council members—after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives.

Tharoor, who has publicly supported India's firm response to cross-border terrorism, will lead the delegation to the United States. Former Union minister Salman Khurshid, though not an MP, will join Jha's team, expected to visit Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

According to sources, Ravi Shankar Prasad's group will visit Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Algeria. Supriya Sule's team will head to Oman, Kenya, South Africa, and Egypt. Each delegation, comprising six to seven MPs, will travel to four or five countries.

Other participating MPs include Anurag Thakur, Aparajita Sarangi, Manish Tewari, Asaduddin Owaisi, Priyanka Chaturvedi, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, and Sasmit Patra, among others. TMC MP Sudip Bandyopadhyay declined participation due to health reasons.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, who requested party nominations, hailed the effort as "a powerful reflection of national unity above politics."

The delegations will also include senior diplomats. The initiative counters Pakistan's narrative on Kashmir and reinforces India's warning that future terror attacks will be treated as acts of war. The government has emphasised that Operation Sindoor is paused, not concluded, pending Pakistan's actions. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 3*

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad, NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule, DMK leader Kanimozhi Karunanidhi (Below) BJP leader Baijayant Panda, JDU leader Sanjay Kumar Jha and Shiv Sena leader Shrikant Eknath Shinde

> **I see no politics in it. When the nation is in crisis and the central government seeks the help of a citizen, what other answer would you give. When national interest is involved, and my services are required, I will not be found wanting**
>
> —Shashi Tharoor, Congress MP

YouTuber held spying for Pakistan

CHANDIGARH, 17 MAY

- In 2023, Jyoti came in contact with Ehsan-ur-Rahim alias Danish at the Pakistan High Commission where she had gone to seek a visa to visit Pakistan.

A Haryana-based YouTuber has been arrested on the charge of passing on sensitive information to Pakistani intelligence operatives.

Jyoti Malhotra, who runs the YouTube channel, Travel with JO and hails from Hisar in Haryana, was arrested from New Aggarsain Extension.

She has been booked under relevant sections of the Official Secrets Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The court sent her to five days in police remand.

Jyoti, whose YouTube channel and Instagram account have 3.77 lakh subscribers and 1.33 lakh followers respectively, allegedly was in contact with a Pakistani staffer working at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi, who had been expelled by India for allegedly indulging in espionage.

Jyoti's YouTube channel accounts for 487 videos, some of which shows her visiting Pakistan.

She has described herself as a 'Nomadic Leo Girl', 'Wanderer Haryanvi + Punjabi' and 'purane khayalon ki modern ladki' on her YouTube channel.

In 2023, Jyoti came in contact with Ehsan-ur-Rahim alias Danish at the Pakistan High Commission where she had gone to seek a visa to visit Pakistan.

Jyoti also met Danish's acquaintance Ali Ahwan who arranged her meeting with Pakistani security and intelligence officials, Shakir and Rana Shahbaz.

She saved Shahbaz's mobile number as 'Jatt Randhawa' to avoid any suspicion.

She passed on sensitive information to them through WhatsApp, Telegram and Snapchat. —*PTI*

PAK TO REBUILD JuD HQ DESTROYED IN INDIAN STRIKES

LAHORE, 17 MAY

Pakistan government has assured to rebuild the mosques, the JuD headquarters, at Muridke destroyed in the Indian strike, the Pakistan Markazi Muslim League (PMML) said on Saturday.

Jamaat-ud-Dawah is a front for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) that carried out terror strikes in India, including the 26/11 Mumbai attack in 2008.

Indian military carried out missile strikes on 7 May on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, including the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) stronghold of Bahawalpur and the LeT's base at Muridke.

Pakistan claimed that India fired four missiles on the mosque and an educational complex in Muridke, destroying them along with homes and a hostel. —*PTI*

MADRAS HC STAYS NEET-UG RESULT

CHENNAI, 17 MAY

The Madras High Court has issued an interim stay on the release of results for the NEET-UG-2025 examination following a petition from several students affected by a power cut at their examination centre in Chennai. Justice V Lakshminarayanan granted the stay on Friday and postponed the case for further hearing on 2 June.

The students claimed that on 4 May, the date of the exam, heavy storms and rainfall caused a power outage from approximately 3.00pm to 4.15pm at PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya CRPF-Avadi, their assigned centre. An affidavit from 13 affected students indicated that there were no backup power generators or inverters available. They reported being forced to complete the exam under poor lighting conditions, with rainwater entering the examination hall, which led to further disruptions as they were instructed to move from their seats. Despite these challenges, examination authorities did not grant any additional time to the students, preventing them from completing the exam fully. The petitioners argued that this created a fundamentally unfair examination environment, violating Article 14 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law, as well as infringing upon their rights under Article 21, which protects life and liberty.

They emphasised that a national-level competitive examination like NEET should offer a level playing field, which they believed had been denied. Despite their timely representations on the day of the exam and subsequent follow-ups, the petitioners noted that the authorities had yet to address their legitimate concerns. —*PTI*

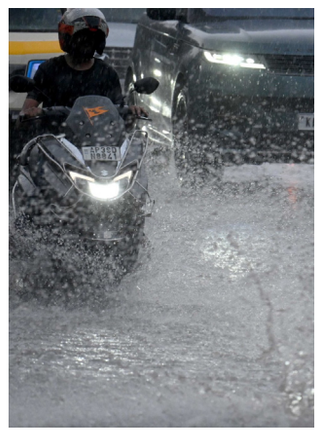
Rain brings B'luru to standstill

BENGALURU, 17 MAY

A fierce pre-monsoon downpour wreaked havoc on Saturday evening, paralysing Bengaluru's traffic and leaving large parts of the city submerged in knee-deep water.

Gusty winds touching 50 kmph accompanied relentless rain for the third consecutive day, flooding key arterial roads including Mysore Road, Shivajinagar, KR Market, Hosur Road, Peenya, Whitefield, and Jayanagar. Motorists crawled through kilometre-long tailbacks, with many vehicles stalling in axle-deep waterlogged stretches.

Overflowing stormwater drains turned roads in Peenya, Magadi Road, Majestic and Koramangala into mini-lakes, exposing the poor state of Bengaluru's drainage infrastructure and ineffective desilting work. Garbage-laden floodwaters clogged junctions, further worsening the chaos.



Fallen tree branches in areas like BTM Layout, Rajajinagar and Koramangala blocked roads, with traffic police and civic workers attempting to clear them. The situation was aggravated by the IPL match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Kolkata Knight Riders at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, adding to the gridlock.

BBMP officials claimed emergency crews were on standby and pumps had been deployed in flood-prone areas. But their assurances offered little comfort to commuters stranded for hours on what should have been short trips.

The Indian Meteorological Department attributed the heavy rains to a depression over the Bay of Bengal fuelling moist easterlies into Karnataka.

Nine killed in lightning strikes in Odisha.

At least nine people, including six women, were killed and several others injured in lightning strikes across Odisha during severe thunderstorms. The fatalities occurred in various districts: three in Koraput, two each in Jajpur and Ganjam, and one each in Dhenkanal and Gajapati. —*Salar News with Agencies*

Praveen complained of chest pain before collapsing

Bagalkot man dies 15 minutes after wedding

BAGALKOT, 17 MAY

A wedding ceremony in Jamkhandi town of Bagalkot district turned tragic when the groom died of a heart attack just 15 minutes after tying the knot.

The incident took place at Nandikeshwara Kalyana Mantapa. The groom, Praveen Kurani, 25, a resident of Kumbarahalli village in Jamkhandi taluk, collapsed on stage shortly after completing the ritual of throwing rice grains (akshate) and tying the mangalsutra. According to eyewitnesses, Praveen complained of chest pain before collapsing. His parents rushed him to a private hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. His body has been sent for post-mortem.

Heart-wrenching scenes unfolded at the venue as family members were overcome with grief. This incident adds to the growing number of heart attack-related deaths among young adults. In February, a 23-year-old woman died of a heart attack while performing at a sangeet in Madhya Pradesh. In December, a boy died while training for a school sports in Uttar Pradesh. —*Salar News*

Man killed after fight over cigarette

BENGALURU, 17 MAY

A 28-year-old software engineer, Sanjay from Vajarahalli, was killed in a road rage incident in South Bengaluru after a petty argument over cigarettes.

On 10 May, after a night shift, he and his friend Chetan stopped at a tea stall near Konanakunte Cross. Prateek, a sales manager, allegedly asked them to buy cigarettes. When refused, he pursued them and rammed their bike. Sanjay died on 13 May; Chetan is hospitalised.

CCTV footage exposed the crime. Prateek has been arrested. —*Salar News*

'NO CIVILIANS HARMED'

Microsoft says it provided AI to Israeli military for Gaza war

WASHINGTON, 17 MAY

Microsoft has acknowledged providing cloud and AI services to the Israeli military during the ongoing Gaza conflict but claims no evidence shows its technologies were used to target or harm civilians.

In a blog post, Microsoft confirmed supplying Azure cloud storage, AI services, translation tools, and cybersecurity support. The company said it offered "special access" and "limited emergency support" during operations to rescue hostages captured by Hamas on 7 October 2023.

The admission follows an Associated Press investigation revealing Israel's military use of Microsoft's Azure to process surveillance data, later integrated with AI-enabled targeting systems. The military use of commercial AI rose nearly 200-fold after the Hamas attack that killed 1,200 Israelis.

Microsoft stated its services were provided with oversight and aligned with its Acceptable Use Policy and AI Code of Conduct, which prohibit unlawful harm. It claims an internal review, supported by an unnamed external firm, found no evidence of misuse by Israel. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 6*

Dalit girl gangraped on way to school in UP

SULTANPUR, 17 MAY

A 14-year-old Dalit girl was reportedly gangraped by three young men, including a minor, while on her way to school in Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh. The incident transpired on Friday morning when the girl, a Class X student, was approached by a 15-year-old suspect who offered her a lift to school.

Instead of taking her to her destination, the accused drove her around before two others, Pradeep (18) and Saurabh (18), joined them. They allegedly took the girl to a room where they bound and gagged her before assaulting her. After regaining consciousness approximately an hour later, the girl managed to call for help. She first informed her aunt about the ordeal, who subsequently alerted the family.

Following her mother's complaint, police registered a case against the suspects under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including gang rape, as well as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Authorities apprehended two suspects and detained the minor on Friday. The adult suspects were remanded in judicial custody for 14 days, while the minor was sent to a juvenile detention centre. —*PTI*

Crime Branch busts prostitution racket running as 'spa'

BENGALURU, 17 MAY

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) Women's Protection Wing busted a prostitution racket operating under the guise of a spa in Basaveshwaranagar on Friday. Acting on a tip-off, CCB officers raided a residential property and discovered it was being used for sex trafficking. Four women, believed to be victims of exploitation, were rescued during the operation. Two individuals allegedly running the racket were detained for questioning. Police said the establishment posed as a spa to avoid detection and had been operating from a house in a residential area. Following the raid, the CCB directed Basaveshwaranagar Police to register a case under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act. A case has been filed, and further investigation is underway. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: X

Helmetless rider dies in Yelahanka after hitting pole

BENGALURU, 17 MAY

A 28-year-old catering worker, Sunil Kumar, died in a road accident on Friday night after crashing his motorcycle into a roadside electricity pole in Yelahanka. The incident occurred around 10pm on the BDA Layout Main Road, as Kumar was riding from Mavallipura towards Ramagondanahalli. Police said he was speeding and lost control, veering into the pole. The impact threw both rider and bike onto the road. As Kumar was not wearing a helmet, he suffered fatal head injuries and died on the spot. A native of Gauribidanur, he was working with a local catering firm. Yelahanka Traffic Police have registered a self-accident case and sent the body for post-mortem. Preliminary findings attribute the crash to speed and negligence. *—Agencies*

Bengaluru cloth merchants boycott Turkey, Azerbaijan

Association cites ethical business practices, national interest

BENGALURU, 17 MAY

The Bangalore Wholesale Cloth Merchants Association (BWCMA) has announced the suspension of all textile trade – both imports and exports – with Turkey and Azerbaijan, citing their recent support for Pakistan in the aftermath of 'Operation Sindoor'.

In a unanimous resolution, the association said the decision reflects its commitment to ethical business practices and national interest. BWCMA President Prakash Pirgal stated, "This collective action has been taken after careful deliberation. As responsible stakeholders in the textile trade sector, we believe it is essential to take principled stands when necessary."

The body of 3,000 wholesale cloth shops across Bengaluru said its trade with the two countries runs into crores of rupees **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

As per the resolution, BWCMA members have agreed to:

- Halt all current and future textile imports from Turkey and Azerbaijan
- Cease all ongoing or planned exports to these countries
- Refrain from indirect trade involving textile goods linked to these nations via intermediaries

The association, comprising around 3,000 wholesale cloth shops across Bengaluru, said its trade with the two countries runs into crores of rupees, though no exact figures were disclosed.

Pirgal noted that Turkey and Azerbaijan openly backed Pakistan following Operation Sindoor. "We stand with the Government of India—nation comes first. India had stood by Turkey during their earthquake crisis, but they have now supported a nation that sends terrorists to harm us," he said.

- The resolution will be effective until further notice. The Bangalore Wholesale Cloth Merchants Association has urged trade partners, logistics providers, and other stakeholders to cooperate and ensure compliance with the trade suspension

The resolution will remain effective until further notice. BWCMA has urged trade partners, logistics providers, and other stakeholders to cooperate and ensure compliance with the trade suspension.

The move adds to growing calls for economic boycotts by Indian business groups in response to geopolitical tensions and foreign stances against national interest. *—PTI*

FIGHT FOR FAIR FARE

Members of transgender community take part in an agitation, alleging social discrimination in the society, at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Saturday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

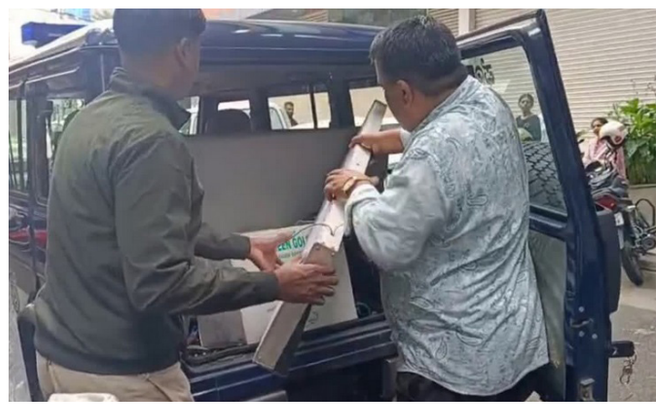
Youth stabbed in Dakshina Kannada district

MANGALURU, 17 MAY

A young painter was reportedly stabbed by a group of four men in Dakshina Kannada district late on Friday night. The incident occurred near the Akkarangaadi bus stop in Bantwal taluk, where the victim, identified as Hameed, was standing by the roadside.

According to initial police investigations, the assault is believed to have been orchestrated by a group led by a man named Harris. The motive appears to stem from personal enmity, a senior police officer indicated. Hameed sustained serious injuries to his hand.

The attack has heightened tensions in the area, which had only recently returned to a semblance of normalcy following the murder of Hindutva activist and rowdy sheeter Suhas Shetty. *—PTI*



Authorities are investigating whether the hotel's display system was hacked or misused **PHOTO: SALAR**

Hotelier booked for derogatory remark against Kannada

BENGALURU, 17 MAY

A case has been registered against the owner of GS Suites, a hotel in Maruthi Nagar, Koramangala, after an LED display board on the premises allegedly flashed derogatory remarks targeting the Kannada language and Kannadigas. The offensive message, which appeared on Friday night, sparked public outrage and went viral on social media.

Alert residents reported the incident to Madiwala Police, who promptly arrived, verified the content, and seized the display board as evidence. A suo motu case was filed by the police sub-inspector monitoring social media. The display was immediately taken down.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Sarah Fathima confirmed that a case had been registered against the hotel owner, who is currently said to be abroad. Five hotel staff members have been detained for questioning. Notices will be issued to all those linked to the incident.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the hotel had raised concerns with the signage vendor in Koramangala about unauthorised messages appearing on the board. The signage contract was issued three years ago, and unusual messages reportedly began appearing on May 8.

Authorities are investigating whether the display system was hacked or misused. Representatives of the vendor have been summoned to explain the technical functioning of the system and help trace how the objectionable message was uploaded.

The incident has drawn strong condemnation from local Kannada groups and the wider public. Police have assured that strict action will be taken against those responsible, and electronic evidence is being collected to support the inquiry.

—Salar News with Agencies

Cong's Shivalinge Gowda eyes Cabinet position

HASSAN, 17 MAY

Congress MLA KM Shivalinge Gowda has expressed optimism regarding his imminent induction into the Karnataka Cabinet amid anticipated reshuffles, asserting that his transition from the JD(S) to Congress was underpinned by a promise of a ministerial post.

K M Shivalinge Gowda **PHOTO: ANI**

The Arasikere MLA emphasised that the reshuffle is yet to take place but remains hopeful for a ministerial role whenever it occurs. As pressure mounts for a cabinet realignment as the government marks its second anniversary, Gowda said his commitment to the party's strengthening efforts.

"I was brought to Congress from the JD(S) with the assurance of a ministerial position. There is no secret in that. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has assured me in front of the media and at public meetings that I would be granted a ministerial post after two and a half years of governance," Gowda told reporters.

Gowda highlighted the necessity of this appointment, given that he is the sole Congress MLA representing Hassan district.

"To bolster the party and advance its interests, I believe a ministerial position should be allocated. This is a political calculation, and I am confident that when the high command approves a cabinet reshuffle, I will be taken into consideration," he said. *—PTI*

MANGALURU–BENGALURU TRAINS NOT TO RUN FOR 154 DAYS

MANGALURU, 17 MAY

In a significant disruption to daytime train services, some routes between Mangaluru and Bengaluru will be suspended for 154 days starting 1 June due to ongoing railway electrification work in the Sakleshpur–Subrahmanya Road section, announced the South Western Railway on Saturday.

The cancelled services include the Yeshvantpur–Mangaluru Gomateshwara Express on Saturdays from 31 May to 1 November, and the Mangaluru–Yeshvantpur Weekly Express on Sundays from 1 June 1 to 2 November. Additionally, the Yeshvantpur–Mangaluru Tri-weekly Express (Tuesdays, Thursdays, Sundays) will be suspended from 1 June to 30 August. Other affected trains include various Tri-weekly Express services between Yeshvantpur, Karwar, and Mangaluru.

Passenger associations and travel committees have voiced their concerns regarding the cancellations, highlighting a lack of consultation and the absence of alternative arrangements. They have urged railway authorities to find ways to manage the infrastructure work without causing undue inconvenience to the public. *—PTI*

₹4cr MDMA seized, foreigner held

BENGALURU, 17 MAY

A 40-year-old foreign national has been apprehended for allegedly trafficking synthetic drugs to college students and IT professionals, according to police reports. Daniel Arinze Okwosha, originally from an unspecified African country, was arrested by the Central Crime Branch after a tip-off led to a raid on his rented flat in Soladevanahalli.

Authorities seized MDMA valued at approximately Rs 4 crore (around £400,000) during the operation. The police indicated that Okwosha had come to Bengaluru on a business visa in December 2023 and was living with a friend, who managed to evade capture during the raid.

Investigations revealed that Okwosha had been sourcing drugs from associates in other states and local contacts within Bengaluru, targeting vulnerable groups such as students and IT employees. The police confiscated 1.48 kg of white MDMA crystals and 1.1 kg of brown MDMA crystals during the operation, marking a significant intervention in the ongoing battle against drug trafficking in the region. *—PTI*

KIA achieves record profit since its inception

BENGALURU, 17 MAY

Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru has announced a record profit for the first time since its inception, marking a significant financial turnaround, according to sources from the Bangalore International Airport Authority (BIAL).

The milestone was discussed during a board meeting on 16 May, chaired by the Chief Secretary to the Government of Karnataka, Shalini Rajneesh.

The recent success underscores the airport's strategic growth, sustainability initiatives, and commitment to operational excellence.

In 2025, BLR Airport garnered multiple prestigious global recognitions, reinforcing its status as a leader in sustainable and safe airport operations worldwide. Notably, on 5 May, 2024, it became the first airport in Asia to achieve Level 5 Accreditation under the Airport Carbon Accreditation programme, celebrating a remarkable 95.6 per cent reduction in Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions, achieving net-zero status seven years ahead of its 2030 target.

The airport also received the Silver Award in the ACI Green Airports Recognition 2025 for its sustainable energy initiatives, making it the fourth consecutive year that BLR Airport has been recognised for its commitment to sustainability leadership.

Meanwhile, Mangaluru International Airport has achieved its highest-ever passenger traffic in the financial year 2024-25, accommodating 2.32 million travellers, according to officials. This signifies a 15.34 per cent increase from 2.01 million in 2023-24 and a remarkable 24.1 per cent rise compared to pre-Covid 19 levels in 2019-20. *—PTI*

Minister rules out fee hike for med, dental courses

BENGALURU, 17 MAY

Karnataka's Minister for Medical Education, Sharan Prakash Patil, announced that there will be no increase in the fee structure for medical and dental courses in the upcoming academic year, despite requests from private medical colleges for a 10 to 15 per cent hike.

Sharan Prakash Patil **PHOTO: FB**

During a meeting with representatives of private college managements, Patil affirmed that last year's approved 10 per cent increase was deemed sufficient. He made it clear that the government will not permit a fee rise this year. An agreement formalising this decision is expected to be signed soon.

The minister's stance emphasizes the government's commitment to maintaining the affordability of medical education amid ongoing financial pressures faced by private institutions. This decision aims to support students and ensure access to quality education without imposing additional financial burdens. *—PTI*

Woman killed as auto rams into parked truck

BENGALURU 17 MAY

A 26-year-old woman died and her mother was injured after the auto-rickshaw they were travelling in collided with a stationary truck on a flyover in Yelahanka on Friday night.

The deceased has been identified as Priya, a resident of Yelahanka New Town. Her mother, Malathi, sustained minor injuries and is receiving treatment at a hospital.

The incident occurred around 9.45 pm, as the two were returning home from shopping on Commercial Street. While travelling via Hebbal, their auto-rickshaw crashed into an Eicher Canter truck parked without hazard lights or reflectors on the BB Road flyover near Attide Hotel. *—Salar News*

SIDELINED IN POLITICS

Madigas to continue agitation until quota demand is met

MYSURU, 17 MAY

Former minister and senior Madiga leader H Anjaneya on Saturday said the community will continue its statewide agitation until the Karnataka government fulfils key demands, including internal reservation and proportionate political representation.

Speaking at a meeting of Madiga leaders from Mysuru and Chamarajanagar districts at the Jaladarshini Guest House, Anjaneya said the community, despite forming a substantial portion of the Scheduled Castes (SC) population in districts like Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Kolar and Chikkaballapura, has been historically underrepresented in politics and public service. "Only a few leaders such as N Rachaiah, TN Narasimhamurthy, KH Muniyappa, Govind Karjol, and Ramesh Jigajinagi have risen to prominence," he said.

H Anjaneya **PHOTO: PTI**

Anjaneya pointed out that the agitation for internal reservation gained momentum after similar efforts succeeded in Andhra Pradesh, but the lack of unity among Karnataka's Madigas has hindered progress, despite recommendations from commissions like Justice Sadashiva and J C Madhuswamy.

He welcomed the state government's decision to constitute the Justice HN Nagamohan Das Commission to conduct a caste-based survey for accurate SC population data. He urged community members to truthfully declare themselves as Madigas, rather than Adi Karnataka, Adi Dravida, or Adi Andhra, to ensure targeted benefits. *—Salar News*

Tibetans seek release of Panchen Lama

MYSURU, 17 MAY

Marking 30 years since the abduction of Tibet's 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, members of the Middleway Tibetan Youth Congress, Regional Tibetan Women's Association, and Tibetan Students Associations from Bylakuppe, Hunsur, and Kollegal staged a protest march on the main streets of Mysuru on Saturday.

The protest commemorated the May 17, 1995 abduction of the then six-year-old Panchen Lama by the Chinese authorities, making him the world's youngest political prisoner. Recognised as the reincarnation of the 11th Panchen Lama by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he disappeared just three days later and remains missing to this day. Protesters expressed deep concern over his well-being and religious education, emphasising his vital role in Tibetan spiritual hierarchy.

Activists also condemned the repression under Chinese rule, citing that more than 2,500 political prisoners remain in detention, and 166 Tibetans have self-immolated in protest. They demanded the immediate release of the Panchen Lama and all political prisoners.

They called on the Xi Jinping-led Chinese government to end bilingual education policies in Tibetan schools, stop separating Tibetan children from their families, and respect the cultural and religious rights of the Tibetan people. Protesters urged the UNHRC to press China for answers regarding the Panchen Lama's whereabouts. *—Salar News*

Assam police arrest 1 more for alleged support to Pak

GUWAHATI, 17 MAY

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma confirmed that an additional individual has been apprehended for allegedly "supporting Pakistan", bringing the total number of arrests to 65 in connection with the Pahalgam terror attack. The latest arrest occurred in the Kokrajhar district, where Joynal Abedin was detained for expressing pro-Pakistan sentiments on social media. The police initiated this crackdown on individuals engaging in anti-India and pro-Pakistan activities following the tragic attack on April 22, which resulted in the deaths of 26 people. Among those arrested is opposition AIUDF MLA Aminul Islam, who initially faced sedition charges but was later held under the National Security Act after securing bail. *—PTI*

Dissatisfied AAP councillors launch new party

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

In a significant political development, 13 councillors from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) resigned on Saturday, announcing the formation of a new political group, the Indraprastha Vikas Party. Senior councillor Mukesh Goyal, who will serve as the party's President, expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of development work during their two and a half years in office, attributing this stagnation to internal conflicts within AAP. Goyal claimed that councillors were denied budgets to undertake essential projects in their wards and emphasised the need for a focus on substantial work benefitting people of Delhi. The newly formed party aims to ensure effective governance and the implementation of public interest policies. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Lawyers workshop delays RaGa defamation trial

SULTANPUR, 17 MAY

A hearing in the defamation case against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was adjourned on Saturday as local lawyers attended a workshop. The case was brought by BJP politician Vijay Mishra in 2018, following Gandhi's alleged remarks against senior BJP leader Amit Shah during the Karnataka Assembly elections. Santosh Kumar Pandey, representing Mishra, noted all lawyers were absent, resulting in the hearing being postponed until 2 June. During the previous hearing, a witness was partially cross-examined before the special MP/MLA court, presided over by Judge Shubham Verma. *—PTI*

Cong: Govt is 'playing games' while selecting delegation

Ramesh says it's 'mischievous' to ask for a list and then ignore it

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

The Congress on Saturday accused the government of "playing games" with a "mischievous mindset" by announcing names of heads other than the four nominated by the party for the diplomatic outreach delegation.

The Opposition party's attack came after Shashi Tharoor was named as the head of a delegation to key partner countries to convey India's message of zero tolerance against terrorism following Operation Sindoor.

At a media briefing Congress head of communications Jairam Ramesh hit out at the government and said, "You cannot include names of MPs (in delegations) without consulting the party."

In a democratic system, when individual MPs are sent on an official delegation, MPs should seek the concurrence of the party, he said.

Ramesh accused the government of playing "Narad Muni politics".

The Congress said it was asked by the government to submit names of four MPs for the all-party delegations it nominated Anand Sharma, Gaurav Gogoi, Syed Naseer Hussain and Amrinder Singh Raja Warring.

He said it is "dishonest" and "downright mischievous" to ask the Congress for names when in all probability, they had decided the names even before that.

"The one who did not come for all-party meetings, did not call a special session, did not break silence on US President Donald Trump and US Secretary of State (Marco) Rubio's claims, announces multi-party delegations," Ramesh said, taking a swipe at Modi.

According to Ramesh, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju called Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and leader Rahul Gandhi and asked them to give the names of four leaders.

"We did not hear anything after that and then we got a PIB release," Ramesh said. "In diplomacy, some things are done in confidence. But today, a different sort of press release came from the side of the government."

In an apparent swipe at Shashi Tharoor, Ramesh noted that senior party leader Salman Khurshid was also approached by the government and he told them that the party has to decide. *—PTI*

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh with party leader Pawan Khera addresses a press conference at the party office, in New Delhi PHOTO: PTI

> **The Congress is like the mighty Ganga, which has many tributaries... Some of them dry up and some get polluted. (On Tharoor) there is a difference between being in the Congress and of the Congress**
>
> -Jairam Ramesh, Congress communication head

> **We are against the BJP's ideology, but when you come to my country and kill my countrymen, then where is the question of my religion coming in the way of my feelings?**
>
> -Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM leader

> **After 26/11, then prime minister Manmohan Singh decided that we should take a step which proves to the world that Pakistan is a terrorist state. We collected the facts then different delegations went to different regions... We created an environment which benefits us even now**
>
> -Kapil Sibal, Independent MP

Himanta urges Rahul to drop 'Assam MP' from list

Guwahati, 17 May

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday urged Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to drop the state's MP from the list for the delegations to be sent abroad. Without naming Gaurav Gogoi, Sarma maintained that he should not be included in the delegations "in the interest of national security". Sarma has been claiming Gogoi is linked to Pakistan through his British wife Elizabeth Colburn, and has claimed that the Jorhat MP had stayed there for 15 days without informing authorities. Gogoi has dismissed the allegations. "Credible documents show that his wife was drawing salary from a Pakistan-based," Sarma wrote on X. *—PTI*

Trump claims ceasefire a success

NEW YORK/ ISLAMABAD 17 MAY

US President Donald Trump said his talking to India and Pakistan and bringing them back from the brink is a "bigger success" than he'll ever be given credit for. He said tensions got to a point where the next phase was probably "nuclear".

"A bigger success than I'll ever be given credit for. Those are major nuclear powers. Those are not like a little bit, and they were angry," Trump said in an interview to Fox News on Friday.

Trump was asked about the "couple of foreign policy successes" before his trip to the Middle East, when he picked up the phone and called India and Pakistan. Trump replied, "I did, ya".

"And the next phase was probably, did you see where it was getting? It was tit for tat. It was getting deeper and more, I mean, more missiles, everyone was 'stronger, stronger', so to a point where the next one's going to be, you know what? The N word. You know the N word is, right?" Trump said.

Trump went on to say that "I'm using trade to settle scores and to make peace. India... they're one of the highest tariff nations in the world, they make it almost impossible to do business. Do you know that they're willing to cut 100 per cent of their tariffs for the United States?"

Meanwhile, UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy, on a two-day visit to Pakistan, said that the ceasefire between must be "sustained". His visit, the first by a British Foreign Secretary to Pakistan since 2021 *—PTI*

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar during the convocation of Jaipuria Institute of Management, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, on Saturday PHOTO: PTI

Dhankhar likens Op Sindoor to Osama bin Laden's killing

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday drew similarities between 'Operation Sindoor' and the killing of Osama bin Laden by US forces in Pakistan.

Describing attacks on nine terror sites in Pakistan as the "deepest-ever cross-border strike" by India, Dhankhar recalled the 11 September, 2001 terror attacks in the United States.

Without naming bin Laden, he said that on 2 May, 2011, a global terrorist who planned, supervised, and executed 11 September attacks was "dealt with" by the US forces "similarly".

"Bharat has done it. And done it to the knowledge of the world," he said at Jaipuria Institutions.

He added that a new "global benchmark" was set. He claimed the strikes were so precise that only terrorists were harmed.

Dhankhar said that after the Pahalgam terror attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given a message to the global community from Bihar. "Those were not empty words. The world has now realised."

Dhankhar added that people cannot help economies of nations, through import or travel, that are inimical to the interests of India.

His remarks came amid trade and tourism boycott of Turkey and Azerbaijan following their support to Pakistan.

"Time has come when each one of us must deeply think about economic nationalism," he said. *—PTI*

Centre plans to extend Ranbir canal

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

The government planning to increase the length of the Ranbir canal on the Chenab river to 120km as part of its efforts to maximise the use of water that India will get after suspension of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).

India has been using limited water from Chenab, mostly for irrigation, but the treaty's suspension provided a scope of expanding its use, especially in the power generation sector to meet the energy needs.

India is planning to enhance its current hydropower capacity of around 3000 megawatts on the rivers earlier used by Pakistan and a feasibility study in this regard is planned.

"One of the major plans is enhancing the length of the Ranbir canal to 120 km. All stakeholders have been urged to expedite the process," an official said.

The process of desilting the Kathua, Ravi and Paragwal canals have begun, an official said.

The water treaty governed the distribution and use of the Indus river and its tributaries between India and Pakistan. *—PTI*

TENSIONS CONTINUE

SIA holds 23 terror suspects in J&K

SRINAGAR, 17 MAY

Jammu and Kashmir Police's State Investigation Agency (SIA) on Saturday conducted raids at 11 locations in Kashmir and detained at least 23 suspects for questioning as part of its investigation into sleeper cell modules in the valley, officials said. During the raids, substantial incriminating materials were seized, officials said. Preliminary investigation revealed the suspects are actively engaged in terrorist conspiracy, propagating anti-India narratives aimed at challenging sovereignty and inciting communal hatred.

Search efforts start in J&K's Samba

JAMMU, 17 MAY

Security forces on Saturday launched a search operation after getting information about the movement of three suspected terrorists near a forest area in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. They said a joint team of police and paramilitary forces cordoned off Nangal, Chilladanga, Goran and adjoining forests early morning for a thorough operation, which is underway. No trace of the suspected terrorists was found so far.

Fake grenade found in Punjab

CHANDIGARH, 17 MAY

An object resembling a hand-grenade was found outside a liquor shop in the Batala town in Punjab's Gurdaspur district on Saturday, police said. A bomb disposal team was called in and the area was cordoned off, said a police official. . However, officials later realised it was a hoax and arrested a man for placing it as a publicity stunt.

Phone racket linked to Pak busted

GUWAHATI, 17 MAY

Seven people were arrested as the Assam police on Saturday claimed to have busted a racket that provided mobile phone connections to cybercriminals, including Pakistanis, for opening WhatsApp accounts. The arrests were made since Friday afternoon in simultaneous raids in two districts of Assam, one district of Telangana and two districts of Rajasthan. 15 people are being questioned and a 948 SIM cards were seized.

DEMAND CONCRETE ACTION

Devastated border dwellers demand aid, shelter

KHOUR, 17 MAY

Devastated by intense artillery shelling from across the Line of Control, several border residents of hamlets in the Khour-Pargwal sector of the Jammu district are pleading for government help after losing their homes, livestock, and livelihoods.

The recent shelling and drone strikes in Jammu killed 27 people and injured more than 70. Thousands fled from the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border areas to seek refuge in government-run relief camps.

Kamla Devi, a resident of a border village, returned home with her brother only to find her house in ruins and their livestock dead. "Where would we live now? We were dependent on these animals. Now they are dead and our house is destroyed," she said tearfully. "There is no work here now. Please give us a place to live. We are homeless".

Deepak Kumar, who sustained a minor injury to his ear and suffered damage to his house, echoed similar sentiments. He narrated how the artillery shells destroyed his neighbour Karan Singh's house.

"This (tit for tat) policy only brings more suffering to border residents. The only solution is war with Pakistan," he said."We want a roof over our heads. We urge Modi to ensure shelters and compensation." *—PTI*

A house damaged in cross-border shelling by Pakistan in Salamabad village in J&K's Uri PHOTO: PTI

Nitish's Covid insensitivity drove me to politics: PK

PATNA, 17 MAY

Prashant Kishor, founder of the Jan Suraaj Party, said the insensitivity of the Nitish Kumar government during the Covid-19 pandemic propelled him into politics.

The former political strategist, known for his work with leaders such as Narendra Modi and Mamata Banerjee, rejected suggestions that he established his party for power.

"I orchestrated the Mahagathbandhan's victory in the 2015 assembly elections. If personal power was my objective, I would have pursued it then," Kishor said in a podcast interview.

He said his motivation for launching the Jan Suraaj Party was witnessing the struggles of Bihari migrants during the pandemic. "Bihar suffers because leaders believe they will win without delivering results." *—PTI*

PM ON 2-DAY VISIT TO BIHAR FROM 29 MAY

PATNA, 17 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Bihar later this month for a two-day tour during which he is scheduled to launch several projects and address a public rally, state BJP leaders said on Saturday.

The visit assumes significance with assembly elections scheduled later this year.

According to Deputy Chief Minister and former BJP state president Samrat Choudhary, Modi is scheduled to arrive on 29 May and inaugurate the new terminal of Patna Airport. Modi will lay the foundation stone for Patna-Sasaram road.

Modi will also address a public rally at Bikramganj in Rohtas district and launch a number of projects on 30 May.

Meanwhile, the Congress appointed party leader Kumar Gaurav head of the war room for the Bihar elections. *—PTI*

TN govt defends TASMAC officials raided by ED

CHENNAI, 17 MAY

Tamil Nadu Excise Minister S Muthusamy has come out in strong support of state officials amid an ongoing investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) into an alleged Rs 1,000 crore scam involving the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC). Muthusamy accused the ED of engaging in "political vendetta" and violating Supreme Court procedures, asserting that the searches conducted on TASMAC's headquarters stem from cases initiated during the previous AIADMK regime.

The minister condemned the ED's actions and pledged that the government would back state officials, alleging that the agency has failed to uncover any evidence of wrongdoing.

"In order to justify its assertion of a scam, the ED is continually harassing officials," he remarked, referring to recent searches conducted at the residences of TASMAC Managing Director S Visakan.

In response, AIADMK leader Edappadi K Palaniswami criticised the DMK government for its handling of the situation, questioning when Chief Minister MK Stalin would address the ED's investigation. *—PTI*

Tiger search on in Malappuram after fatal attack

MALAPPURAM, 17 MAY

The search for a tiger that killed a man near Kalikavu is ongoing, with the forest department deployed extensive resources despite not yet locating the animal. The victim, 45-year-old Gafoor, was killed on Thursday while working with a friend. In light of the incident, the government has transferred Divisional Forest Officer Dhanik Lal to Thiruvananthapuram amid his pending prosecution under the Prevention of Corruption Act, raising concerns over the impact on the search operations. Congress MLA A P Anilkumar insists the transfer should not disrupt efforts to locate the tiger. Over 50 camera traps and thermal drone cameras have been deployed, alongside trained kumki elephants and forest personnel equipped with tranquilisers. DFO Lal noted that the thick undergrowth in the area could provide the tiger with hiding spots, necessitating collaboration with local farmers to clear these areas. *—PTI*

Four killed, 15 injured after bus hits van in Karur

KARUR, 17 MAY

At least four individuals lost their lives, and 15 others sustained injuries when an omni bus collided with a tractor and then smashed into a tourist van on the Karur-Salem Highway near Semmadai, Tamil Nadu, on Saturday. The driver of the tourist van was among the deceased, according to police reports. The omni bus, en route from Bengaluru to Nagercoil, initially struck the tractor, causing it to veer into oncoming traffic. The impact resulted in significant damage to the front ends of the omni bus, tractor, and tourist van. Emergency services transported the injured to a local government hospital for treatment. Authorities have registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident, which underscores the ongoing concerns regarding road safety in the region *—PTI*

Teen held for kidnapping, assaulting minor

THANE, 17 MAY

A 19-year-old man has been apprehended for the alleged kidnapping and molestation of a four-year-old girl in Navi Mumbai's Vashi area. The distressing incident occurred on 15 May when the child was playing near her home in a housing complex. The accused reportedly lured the girl away, but vigilant residents quickly noticed her absence and caught him attempting to flee. He was handed over to the police shortly thereafter. Authorities have registered a case under Section 137(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The investigation into this grave matter is ongoing, as the community expresses outrage over the incident. *—PTI*

Three killed in accident in Andhra Pradesh

KAKINADA, 17 MAY

In a tragic incident in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, three people lost their lives when the car they were travelling in collided with a stationary truck early on Saturday morning. The accident occurred around 2am on National Highway 16, just outside Tuni. Two of the car's occupants died instantly, while a third succumbed to injuries later in a local hospital. The victims, five sales executives returning from a meeting in Vizag to Rajahmundry, were involved in the unfortunate collision. The remaining survivors are out of danger. Police have opened an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the crash, filing a case under Section 104 A of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) as they work to determine the events leading to this fatal accident. *—PTI*

ISRO satellite to enhance India's surveillance power

The 1,696kg EOS-9 satellite will be launched on 18 May

- The 1,696-kg EOS-9 radar imaging satellite will be launched on 18 May at 5.59am from the Satish Dhawan Space Center in Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota

PHOTO: ISRO

SRIHARIKOTA, 17 MAY

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch a satellite to augment India's satellite-based surveillance capability. The satellite can reportedly view through clouds and at night

The 1,696-kilogram EOS-9 radar imaging satellite will be launched on 18 May at 5.59am from the Satish Dhawan Space Center in Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota.

The "spy"satellite, to be placed into orbit on board the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, will be stationed over 500 km above the earth's surface.

ISRO's UR Rao Satellite Center in Bengaluru designed the satellite, which is equipped with a C-band synthetic aperture radar that allows it to capture high-resolution images of the earth's surface under all weather conditions and in darkness at night.

The satellite can capture better images in comparison to the Cartosat-3 satellite, which is not designed to capture images at night, though it can send images from its low earth orbit.

India has over 57 satellites in space at present.

ISRO chairman V Narayanan said that 10 satellites were working to ensure the security of India by helping monitor the country's 7,000-km seashore areas and its northern part. The country could not achieve this without satellites and drone technology.

Union Minister for Space and Technology, Jitendra Singh lauded the mission saying that precision, teamwork and engineering made India's space ambitions possible.

Several members of Parliament and members of the department related to Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science, Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change headed by Rajya Sabha MP Bhubaneshwar Kalita will attend the event.

—Salar News

RISE IN TYPE 2 DIABETES

CBSE moots 'sugar boards' in schools to monitor students

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has directed affiliated schools to establish "sugar boards" to monitor and reduce sugar intake of children.

The CBSE noted that there has been a significant increase in Type 2 diabetes among children, a condition once primarily seen in adults, over the past decade.

"This alarming trend is largely attributed to high sugar intake, often due to the easy availability of sugary snacks, beverages and processed foods within school environments. The excessive consumption of sugar not only increases the risk of diabetes but also contributes to obesity, dental problems and other metabolic disorders, ultimately impacting children's long-term health and academic performance," the CBSE said in a letter to school principals.

Studies indicate that sugar constitutes 13 per cent of daily calorie intake for children under 10 years, and 15 per cent for those aged 11 to 18 years, substantially exceeding the recommended limit of 5 per cent. The schools are to establish 'sugar boards' displaying information about the risks of excessive sugar intake to educate students about food choices and promote long-term health benefits. These boards should provide essential information, including the recommended daily sugar intake, the sugar content in commonly consumed, health risks associated with high sugar consumption and healthier dietary alternatives. *—PTI*

NIA arrests 2 ISIS sleeper cell members in Mumbai

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested two absconders, allegedly part of a sleeper cell of terrorist outfit ISIS, from Mumbai airport. The duo was wanted in a 2023 case related to fabrication and testing of IEDs in Maharashtra's Pune.

The accused, identified as Abdullah Faiyaz Shaikh alias Diaperwala and Talha Khan, were intercepted by the Bureau of Immigration at the Mumbai International Airport Terminal 2 on 16 May when they tried to return to India from Jakarta in Indonesia, where they had been hiding.

The duo, who had been absconding for over two years, had non-bailable warrants issued against them by the NIA Special Court, Mumbai.

A cash reward of Rs 3 lakh each for information on them was also declared.

The two had conspired to commit terrorist acts to disturb India's peace and communal harmony by waging a war against the Indian government in furtherance of the ISIS agenda to establish Islamic rule in the country.

They allegedly assembled IEDs and carried out controlled explosion to test them in a house rented by Shaikh in Kondhwa in Pune.

They had also organized and participated in a bomb-making and training workshop. The NIA had chargesheeted 10 accused in the case. *—PTI*

NIA raids 15 locations in Punjab

The National Investigation Agency on Saturday carried out searches at 15 locations linked with banned Babbar Khalsa International terrorist group in Punjab in a case related to grenade attack on a police station in Gurdaspur district last year, the NewsAir reported. The agency said searches were carried out in Gurdaspur, Batala, Amritsar and Kapurthala districts of Punjab, which led to the seizure of various incriminating materials. *—PTI*

Helicopter ambulance makes emergency landing in K'nath

A damaged helicopter of AIIMS Rishikesh's Heli Ambulance Service after it crashed while landing at Kedarnath, in Rudraprayag district of Uttarakhand, on Saturday ***PHOTO : PTI***

RUDRAPRAYAG, 17 MAY

A 'Sanjeevani' heli ambulance, operated by AIIMS Rishikesh, made an emergency landing in Kedarnath, Uttarakhand, on Saturday following a technical malfunction. The incident occurred while the helicopter was en route to rescue a pilgrim experiencing respiratory distress, according to District Tourism Development Officer Rahul Chaubey.

The helicopter developed a technical issue with its tail rotor as it approached the main helipad. The pilot took prompt action to land the aircraft on a flat surface near the helipad, ensuring the safety of the two doctors and the pilot onboard. Fortunately, all three individuals emerged unscathed from the incident.

- The helicopter developed a technical issue with its tail rotor as it approached the main helipad. All three individuals onboard emerged unscathed

Chaubey, who also serves as the nodal officer for the heli service, confirmed that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will initiate an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the malfunction. The helicopter had been dispatched to assist Shree Devi, the patient in need of urgent medical attention.

This incident underscores the vital role of air ambulance services in remote areas, particularly during peak pilgrimage seasons in Kedarnath. Authorities are now reviewing the operational protocols to enhance safety measures for future missions. *—PTI*

'Chemist's prescription' kills MP woman

JHABUA, 17 MAY

UA 32-year-old woman died in Madhya Pradesh's Jhabua district after she consumed a sulphas tablet she was handed out at a local medical store where she went to purchase a painkiller for toothache, police said on Saturday.

The police have arrested the medical store owner under section 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Jhabua Superintendent of Police Padma Vilochan Shukla told PTI.

He said the victim, Rekha,

who hailed from Dharampuri village, about 3 km from the district headquarters, went to a medical store near Thandla gate on Thursday evening and asked for a medicine for toothache.

A salesperson at the establishment handed her a sulphas tablet, which she consumed at home that night, and her health deteriorated. She was rushed to a hospital, where she died, the official said.

The family informed the police on Friday, and the body was sent for post-mortem, he said.

A preliminary post-mortem examination report confirmed death due to sulphas, following which a case was registered and the store owner, Lokendra Babel, 52, was arrested, he said. *—PTI*

Kuki leader booked for threatening Meiteis

IMPHAL, 17 MAY

Manipur Police have registered a First Information Report (FIR) against Paojakhup Guite, the president of the Kuki Student Organisation Delhi, following his alarming threats directed at the Meitei community regarding attendance at the forthcoming Shirui Lily festival in Ukhrul district.

In a video that has circulated widely on social media, Guite declared that any Meiteis attempting to cross the buffer zones to attend the festival would not be allowed to leave alive. In response, the Churachandpur police are conducting raids in nearby districts to locate and arrest him, with assistance requested from police forces in Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland, and Meghalaya.

The Shirui Festival, celebrating the state's emblematic flower, the Shirui Lily, is scheduled to run from 20 to 24 May . The route from Imphal to Ukhrul passes through multiple Kuki villages, raising security concerns amid ongoing ethnic tensions that have resulted in over 260 deaths and thousands displaced since May 2023. Despite the unrest, Kuki chiefs along the Imphal-Ukhrul road have assured the Tangkhul Naga Long organisation that a peaceful environment will be maintained during the festival. *—PTI*

KIN SEEKS PROBE INTO TOURIST DEATH

WAYANAD, 17 MAY

The family of a woman tourist who allegedly died in a hut collapse at a resort in this hill district on Saturday expressed doubts over the cause of her death and demanded a proper probe into the incident.

The mother of the victim, Nimisha, said that her daughter and several of her friends were sleeping under the hut made of wooden poles and thatched with grass, but nothing happened to others.

Nimisha's brother said the reason for their suspicion is that there were no visible injuries or blood on Nimisha's body. "The postmortem report says that there were a lot of internal injuries, including broken bones. Moreover, the incident occurred around 2am, when everyone was sleeping in that big hut," he said.

"Her friends said two people were sleeping in each tent. So, how come only our child suffered this fate?" he asked. *—PTI*

Bengal's 'sacked' teachers continue protests

KOLKATA, 17 MAY

Unemployed school teachers, who lost their positions following a Supreme Court ruling last month, have resumed their demonstrations outside the West Bengal Education Department headquarters in Salt Lake for a third consecutive day.

Around 1,000 teachers participated in a peaceful sit-in outside Bikash Bhavan throughout the night, under the watchful eyes of police officers stationed nearby. They are demanding that the state government take appropriate legal measures to reinstate them after the Supreme Court invalidated the appointments of 25,753 teachers and other staff in state-aided schools, labelling the entire recruitment process as "vitiated and tainted."

PHOTO: ANI

Protest leader Chinmoy Mondal urged fellow teachers and members of civil society to gather at Bikash Bhavan on Friday afternoon to amplify their demands. He called for immediate discussions with the chief minister regarding their reinstatement. *—PTI*

INGESTING TOXINS

Gangetic dolphins face contamination risk

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

A study has revealed alarming levels of toxic chemicals in the Ganges, threatening the health and even the survival of the endangered Gangetic dolphins.

The study by the Wildlife Institute of India found that these freshwater mammals are being exposed to a hazardous cocktail of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) through their diet.

The researchers analyzed the dietary exposure risks of 39 EDCs in fish species consumed by Gangetic dolphins.

Significant bioaccumulation of industrial pollutants such as di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) and di-n-butyl phthalate (DnBP) were detected in the dolphins' prey base. Residues of banned pesticides like DDT and Lindane (Î³-HCH) were also found.

The Gangetic dolphin population has declined by over 50 per cent since 1957, and their range has shrunk by nearly a quarter.

With only five species of endangered river dolphins left globally, India could risk their going extinct due to unchecked human activities.

The study attributes the contamination to runoff from agriculture, untreated industrial effluents from the textile sector, vehicular emissions, poor solid waste management and rising tourism in ecologically sensitive areas.

The EDCs can disrupt hormonal systems and reproductive functions in mammals and persist in the ecosystem for long periods.

Although toxicity risk quotients were found to be low, the dolphins were at a high risk from pollutants like DEHP, DnBP, DDT, arsenic, mercury, cadmium, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). *—PTI*

GREENER FUTURE

Over 36 illegally built bungalows near the Indrayani River in Pune's Chikhali were demolished following the National Green Tribunal's 2024 order. The villas were constructed within the river's blue flood line zone, where development is banned. Despite failed legal appeals, including to the Supreme Court, demolition was carried out with police presence
PHOTO: PTI

Indus treaty freeze will affect global politics

Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not mention the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), but his message rang clear — the fighting may have come to an end but the 64-year-old water-sharing deal with Pakistan will remain suspended, or as the Indian government put it: "in abeyance."

So far, the water appears to flow as freely as it has for decades, but some reports say India is considering plans to build infrastructure that would allow it to store and divert more water from the Indus River system.

The Indus is the longest river in South Asia, spanning over 3,000kms. It includes a complex system of tributaries that flows from Tibet, through Kashmir, and into Pakistan, before emptying into the Arabian Sea near Karachi.

Islamabad announced it would consider any withholding of water "an act of war" as the Indus is the most vital source of water for most of Pakistan's farms and hydropower plants.

So what's at stake if one side walks away from a deal once hailed as a rare success story between the two arch-rivals — a treaty that withstood wars, terror attacks, and diplomatic freezes, perhaps until now?

Some experts worry that the entire region's water security could be in danger.

India is upstream on the Indus from Pakistan — but the river originates in Tibet, under Chinese control. At the same time, India is downstream on the Brahmaputra River, which begins in China as the Yarlung Tsangpo and supplies freshwater to millions in northeastern India — making it vulnerable to decisions made upstream.

Others point out that India has only put the treaty "in abeyance" — a legal gray zone which is reversible, and could be seen as a measured diplomatic tool.

India's move to use the IWT as geopolitical leverage "undermines the legal integrity of such treaties," said Farhana Sultana, a water, climate and development expert with research experience in South Asia.

Although holding the Indus Water Treaty in 'abeyance' is a legal grey zone, it sets a dangerous precedent for international law
PHOTO: PTI

"These treaty violations and suspensions can have ripple-on deleterious effects across and beyond the region for the examples they set," Sultana said, adding that "any unilateral suspension of a treaty on transboundary international rivers pose grave threats to regional security."

Sultana, a professor in the department of geography and environment at the US-based Syracuse University, warned that India's government might also be tempted to prioritise its own water needs over those of Bangladesh if the treaty suspension proves to be an effective tool in the case of Pakistan.

India shares the Ganges River basin with Bangladesh under the Ganga Water Treaty signed in 1996 and it is set for renewal next year.

"Transboundary water treaties create trust and predictability for the riparian states, and have typically been separated from other issues," another expert said. "It raises serious concerns as to the future relations with its other neighbors, particularly Bangladesh and China, as trust will be eroded. China is a strong ally of Pakistan."

China has significant investments in Pakistan's hydroelectric infrastructure on the Indus River. It is also investing in the management of the Teesta in Bangladesh — a river which originates in India.

The region is crucial for China's Belt and Road Initiative, a massive infrastructure project launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping to boost China's economic and political influence.

The IWT's framework — negotiated over nine years and uniquely mediated by the World Bank — includes no provision for withdrawal. At the same time, it establishes a multi-tiered dispute resolution system that allows India and Pakistan to resolve disagreements and amend the treaty with mutual consent.

The treaty is strictly bilateral and does not fall under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969).

The IWT also does not address the possibility of "abeyance" — India's chosen phrase. So, while India hasn't officially quit the treaty, it's also not fully operating under its framework — creating a legal gray area.

Gabriel Eckstein, water law and policy expert, said that the move hurts India's previously maintained "moral high ground." *—DW News*

SALAR ساہر

Ukraine forced to play theatrics to win US aid

Since US-brokered talks began in March, Ukraine's strategy has been to convince the Trump administration that Russian President Vladimir Putin is unreliable and that Kyiv is serious about peace.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has few options, analysts and officials say, but to draw US President Donald Trump's ire against Putin, while depending on Europe's united and stalwart support.

In the latest round, Zelenskyy not only accepted Putin's offer to hold talks in Turkey, after the US backed the idea, but raised the stakes and challenged him to a face-to-face. The gesture failed to move Putin and the Istanbul talks were demoted to a technical meeting that failed to yield substantial results.

The US has expressed frustration with the stalled talks and threatened to withdraw if results aren't achieved.

"He and I will meet, and I think we'll solve it," Trump said. "And if we don't solve it, it'll be very interesting."

All along, Zelenskyy's message, to the Trump administration, has been: Puting cannot be trusted.

It's a rhetorical game of pingpong in which both Kyiv and Moscow try to outmanoeuvre the other vis-à-vis the US. But the political theatrics are underscored by stark realities on the ground. In this war of attrition, Ukraine's position is poised to grow weaker with time, unless powerful sanctions are imposed against Moscow and the US continues arms deliveries.

"He is in a difficult situation because behind him is a whole nation of people who are suffering," said Oleksandr Merezkho, a lawmaker in Zelenskyy's party. "We are playing (along), we are trying to do everything we can because we don't want to lose the support of the US."

Putin's no-show did not result in a strong reaction from Trump, which frustrated Ukrainian officials.

"It looks surreal, weird when Ukraine is complying to everything required from us, and Putin ignores, rejects," said Merezhko. "It looks very imbalanced, it looks unfair for Ukraine."

Since March, Zelenskyy has made a point of showing Ukraine's willingness to acquiesce to US demands to avoid alienating Trump.

Russia's position has remained mostly consistent. The Kremlin kept repeating that it was ready for peace talks with Ukraine — while making demands that were politically untenable for Zelenskyy, and would require Ukraine to make territorial concessions, neutralise its army and vow never to join NATO.

Throughout, Moscow has also accused Kyiv and its Western allies of seeking to prolong the fighting.

Most recently, the Kremlin pushed back against a proposed 30-day ceasefire, countering with two brief unilateral ones, and then accused Ukraine of failing to stop the fighting.

"We understand that Washington wants to achieve quick success, but at the same time we hope that there is an understanding that the settlement is too complicated, ," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said last month.

The exchange of 1,000 prisoners after the Turkey meet would be their largest swap yet.

"We showed that we are for peace negotiations," said Mykola Davydiuk, a Ukrainian political scientist. "Now the ball is with Trump."

Despite verbal threats from Europe and the US, sanctions of the kind that could devastate Russia's energy sector have not been forthcoming.

For now, therefore, Zelenskyy has few options but to continue to highlight Putin's disinclination to engage in meaningful talks and keep the US engaged.

For Ukrainian soldiers fighting along the 1,000km front line the theatricality of the week's political developments stood in harsh contrast with the grinding war.

"Better to call it a circus," said a Ukrainian drone operator who, like other soldiers.

Analysts say Russia is at a crucial crossroads in the war, where it can negotiate a truce and consolidate gains, or launch a summer military campaign to maximize wins before the onset of winter.

Ukraine has always been at a disadvantage and faces manpower and ammunition shortages. Analysts have offered estimates of six months to two years for how much longer it can hang on.

Much will depend on what kind of support Ukraine receives and how quickly it can scale up domestic weapons production.

"The feeling is that we will either hold out and allow the political leadership of the country to freeze the conflict along the contact line, or the enemy will break through," said a Ukrainian soldier. *—PTI*

Experts believe that Ukraine can only hold on for six more months
PHOTO: PTI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SC ruling on environmental clearances welcome but not enough

Policy experts on Saturday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision barring the government from granting retrospective environmental clearances but warned that loopholes in environmental laws still exist, and citizens must stay alert to protect their constitutional rights.

In a landmark ruling on Friday, the apex court said the government cannot grant retrospective environmental clearances in the future.

The court made it clear that projects started without mandatory prior environmental clearance cannot be legalised later.

It added that violators who knowingly ignored the law cannot be protected.

The judgement came in response to petitions filed by the NGO Vanashakti and others, challenging two government office memorandums issued in July 2021 and January 2022 which had created a system to grant environmental clearance to projects that began operations without prior approval under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006.

Stalin D, Director of Vanashakti, told PTI that citizens must now ensure the court's directions are followed.

"The judgement clearly says the government cannot try and provide a safe haven for violators. So, we have to ensure that our constitutional framework is not violated in any way."

"One more very pertinent thing in that order is that the people who violated this are not illiterate persons. They are educated, well connected, rich people who knew that they were engaging in a violation, which needs to stop now," he said.

Prakriti Srivastava, a retired Indian Forest Service officer, said while it is a good order, knowing the history of environment ministry and project proponents, they will find a way around.

She said post-facto approvals mean the damage is already done before clearance is granted.

"Will these stop and the ministry obey the SC orders? Let's wait and watch Though knowing the record of MoEFCC, they give two hoots for SC orders and may blatantly disregard them," she added.

Himanshu Thakkar, Coordinator of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, said the decision is welcome but should have come earlier. He also raised concerns about enforcement.

"This is welcome, but the directions could have come sooner. It shows that our system is very slow to react."

"Secondly, where is your credible monitoring system to ensure that this doesn't happen? The third thing is there is a bypassing of the law happening. For example, land acquisition is allowed, even when environment clearance is not there. If you have already acquired land, you are creating impacts, displacing people, you are making the project fait accompli," Thakkar said.

"So, the Supreme Court also needs to put down more stipulations that you cannot acquire land without environmental clearance because once you acquire the land, then you get the right over the land and you can do what you want to do with it, which is again movement towards irreversibility. So, these kinds of loopholes are still there," he said.

The apex court said retrospective environmental clearances cannot be granted
PHOTO:WIKICOMMONS

- Experts welcomed the ruling but said it was too limited. Post-facto clearances, they argued, undermined the very purpose of the ruling as it would be unable to prevent environmental degradation

Debadityo Sinha, Lead - Climate and Ecosystems at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, said the very purpose of the EIA process is to evaluate alternatives, assess environmental and social impacts and enable public consultation before any project receives approval.

It is a fundamental safeguard that ensures development does not come at the cost of ecological integrity."

"Granting post-facto Environmental Clearance undermines this entire framework, allowing projects to bypass due diligence and legal scrutiny. It effectively opens the floodgates for unsustainable, poorly planned developments, often in ecologically sensitive areas, where such projects would never have passed scrutiny in the first place. This not only sets a dangerous precedent but incentivises illegal construction in the hope of regularisation through backdoor clearances," he said.

Sonam Chandwani, Managing Partner at law firm KS Legal and Associates, said the Supreme Court's decision may shake up the existing system but is not a cure-all.

"By killing ex post facto approvals, it puts companies on notice that you start without clearance and you are gambling with your entire project with no retroactive bailouts. Smaller firms, less equipped for legal warfare, might fall in line, seeking clearances upfront to avoid ruin. Activists and communities gain a stronger edge to hold violators accountable, as courts now have a clearer mandate to reject post-facto fixes," she said.

Guman Singh, Coordinator of Himalaya Niti Abhiyan, said they had opposed the government's move to allow retrospective environmental clearances.

He said the Supreme Court's decision clearly reinforces that environmental laws cannot be diluted to legalise illegal projects and promotes accountability. *—PTI*

IDF launches Gideon Chariots in Gaza

Aims to conquer the strip inhibited by Palestinians; at least 150 killed in fresh airstrikes

TEL AVIV, 17 MAY

The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) launched 'Gideon Chariots' campaign for the release of its remaining hostages, Times of Israel reported.

Citing military, Times of Israel said, "IDF troops in the Southern Command will continue to operate to protect Israeli citizens and realize the goals of the war".

According to Israeli officials referred to by the Times of Israel, the Gideon's Chariots offensive would see the IDF "conquering" Gaza and retaining the territory; moving the Palestinian civilian population toward the south of the strip; attacking Hamas; and preventing the terror group from taking control of humanitarian aid supplies.

The details of the operation were also shared by the IDF in a post on X in the early hours of Saturday that it had begun conducting strikes and is mobilising troops to achieve "operational control" in the areas of Gaza.

"The IDF has begun conducting extensive strikes and mobilizing troops to achieve operational control in the areas of Gaza, over the past day. This is part of preparations to expand operations and fulfill the objectives of the war -- including the release of hostages and the dismantling of the Hamas terrorist organization. IDF troops will continue to operate in order to protect Israeli civilians and achieve the objectives of the war."

The operation comes as the air strikes resulted in the deaths of at least 150 people since Friday. —*ANI*

Smoke rises following an Israeli army airstrike in northern Gaza Strip on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Arab leaders press for Gaza reconstruction

BAGHDAD, 17 MAY

Arab leaders meeting at an annual summit in Baghdad said on Saturday that they were trying to reach a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip and promised to contribute to the reconstruction of the territory once the war stops.

The summit was also attended by Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

Among the guests were Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who called for the release of Israeli hostages in Gaza and the flow of aid into the besieged territory.

He said that the UN rejects any "forced displacement" of Palestinians.

Saturday's summit comes two months after Israel ended a ceasefire reached with the Hamas militant group in January. —*PTI*

Leaders arrive in Baghdad on Saturday morning for the annual Arab League Summit, which will discuss crises testing the region's stability including Israel's war on Gaza **PHOTO: X @THENATIONALNEWS**

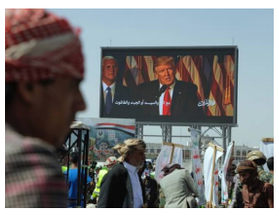


PHOTO: X

Flights resume at rebel-held airport in Yemen's Sanaa

CAIRO, 17 MAY

Flights resumed on Saturday to Yemen's capital of Sanaa, held by the country's Iran-backed Houthi rebels, more than a week after massive Israeli airstrikes disabled the airport. The Israeli strikes on 6 May— a rare daytime attack — destroyed the airport's terminal and left craters on its runway, according to Khaled al-Shaif, the head of the airport. At least six passenger planes were hit, including three belonging to the national carrier, Yemen Airway or Yemenia, he said. On Saturday, a flight from Jordan's capital, Amman, operated by Yemenia, landed at the Sanaa International Airport with 136 passengers on board, according to the Houthis' al-Masirah satellite news channel. —*PTI*

S'pore jails Indian tourist for molesting child

SINGAPORE, 17 MAY

An Indian tourist has been jailed for three months in Singapore for molesting a 12-year-old girl at a swimming complex and sending her inappropriate messages on Instagram. Pramender, 25, who goes by only one name and was a tourist here, pleaded guilty on Friday to one charge of attempting to procure the commission of an indecent act by a child and one charge of molesting a child under 14 years of age, sais the Channel News Asia (CNA). A third charge of trespassing was taken into account for his sentencing. Pramender was accused of following the victim to the toilet at Jalan Besar swimming complex, where she was with her family on Mar 31, the CNA report said on Friday. —*PTI*

China using solar modules for spying: Report

LONDON, 17 MAY

Engineers have discovered 'kill switches' embedded in Chinese-manufactured parts on American solar farms, raising fears that Beijing could manipulate power supplies or "physically destroy" grids across the US, UK and Europe, reported the Daily Mail.

Energy officials are assessing the risks posed by small communication devices in power inverters – an integral component of renewable energy systems that connects them to the power grid.

While inverters are built to allow remote access for updates and maintenance, the utility companies using them typically install firewalls to prevent direct communication back to China.

But US experts found rogue communication devices not listed in product documents in some solar power inverters, two sources told Reuters.

Using these devices to skirt firewalls and switch off inverters remotely, or change their settings, could destabilise power grids, damage energy infrastructure and trigger widespread blackouts, they said. "That effectively means there is a built-in way to physically destroy the grid," said one of the sources.

The discovery has raised fears that Beijing may maintain the capability to wreak havoc on power grids across the Western world such is the reliance of renewable energy systems on Chinese-manufactured parts. —*Agencies*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Russian drone attack kills 9 in Ukraine

KYIV, 17 MAY

A Russian drone struck a passenger bus in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region, killing nine people and injuring four others, Ukrainian officials said on Saturday. The attack came just hours after Moscow and Kyiv held their first direct peace talks in years.

Ukraine's national police released photos showing the aftermath of the strike in Sumy's Bilopillia city, around 10kms from the front line and border with Russia.

"This is another war crime by Russia — a deliberate strike on civilian transport that posed no threat," the Sumy regional administration said in a post on the Telegram messaging app.The Associated Press could not independently verify details of the incident. There was no comment from Moscow.

Russian and Ukrainian officials met in Turkey on Friday but failed to reach a temporary ceasefire. Both sides however agreed on a large prisoner swap. It was the first face-to-face dialogue between the two sides since the early weeks of Moscow's full-scale invasion.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a series of talks with European leaders in Albania and said he hopes international pressure on Russia increases. He wrote on X, "I held a meeting with the President of the European Council, Antonio Costa, and the President of the European Commission, Ursula. I informed them on (the) negotiations in Istanbul. Pressure on Russia must increase. I am therefore grateful for the preparation of the 17th sanctions package. We expect it to target everything that funds Russia's war machine: banks, oil, energy, metallurgy, and the shadow fleet." —*PTI/ANI*

Russian strike on civilian bus in northern Ukraine kills nine **PHOTO: X**

PHOTO: X

Panama protests challenging President Mulino

PANAMA CITY, 17 MAY

Protests in Panama have entered their third week, challenging several recent actions by President José Raúl Mulino. Demonstrators are opposing a recently enacted law that overhauled the country's pension system, a security memorandum of understanding signed with the United States that critics say undermines Panama's sovereignty over the canal, and plans to build a new reservoir on the Indio River to supply water for the Panama Canal's locks. —*PTI*

Grok's insistence on South Africa's White Genocide an error: Musk

WASHINGTON, 17 MAY

Elon Musk's artificial intelligence company said an "unauthorised modification" to its chatbot Grok caused it to continuously talk about South African racial politics and the subject of "White Genocide" this week.

An employee at xAI made a change that "directed Grok to provide a specific response on a political topic," which "violated xAI's internal policies and core values," the company said late Thursday.

Grok had kept posting about "white genocide" in South Africa in response to X a variety of questions, most having nothing to do with South Africa. One exchange was about streaming service Max reviving the HBO name. Others were about video games or baseball.

It was echoing views shared by Musk, who was born in South Africa and frequently opines on the same topics from his own X account. Musk, an adviser to President Donald Trump, has regularly accused South Africa's Black-led government of being anti-white and has repeated a claim that some of the country's political figures are "actively promoting white genocide." —*PTI*

A man relaxes after a severe storm hit St. Louis, Missouri, on Friday **PHOTO: X**

7 DEAD, HEAVY DAMAGE LEFT BY MIDWEST STORMS

ST LOUIS, 17 MAY

At least seven people died and authorities were searching from building to building for people who were trapped or hurt after severe storms, including at least one possible tornado that swept through Missouri.

The storms were part of a severe weather system Friday that caused severe damage in Missouri, spawned tornadoes in Wisconsin, left hundreds of thousands without power in the Great Lakes region and brought a punishing heat wave to Texas.

Sources said that at least four people died and authorities were searching from building to building for people who were trapped or hurt after the storms that swept through St Louis. "This is devastating," Spencer said.

National Weather Service radar indicated that a tornado touched down between 230pm and 2.50pm in Clayton, Missouri, in the St Louis area. The apparent tornado touched down in the area of Forest Park, home to the St. Louis Zoo and the site of the 1904 World's Fair and Olympic Games the same year. —*PTI*

US apex court blocks quick deportation of Venezuelans

WASHINGTON, 16 MAY

The Supreme Court on Friday barred the Trump administration from quickly resuming deportations of Venezuelans under an 18th-century wartime law enacted when the nation was just a few years old.

Over two dissenting votes, the justices acted on an emergency appeal from lawyers for Venezuelan men who have been accused of being gang members, a designation that the administration says makes them eligible for rapid removal from the United States under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798.

The court indefinitely extended the prohibition on deportations from a north Texas detention facility under the alien enemies law. The case will now go back to the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals, which declined to intervene in April.

President Donald Trump quickly voiced his displeasure.

"THE SUPREME COURT WON'T ALLOW US TO GET CRIMINALS OUT OF OUR COUNTRY!" he posted on his Truth Social platform. —*PTI*

COMEY GRILLED BY SECRET SERVICE OVER '86 47' POST

Washington, 17 May

Former FBI Director James Comey told the Secret Service on Friday about a social media post that Republicans insisted was a call for violence against President Donald Trump. The interview was expected to help authorities assess the purpose and intent of the post. —*PTI*

Iran to continue N-talks with US, firm on rights

TEHRAN, 17 MAY

Iran's president said his country will continue talks with the United States over its rapidly advancing nuclear programme but will not withdraw from its rights because of US threats.

"We are negotiating, and we will negotiate, we are not after war but we do not fear any threat," President Masoud Pezeshkian said during a speech to navy officials broadcast by state television Saturday.

"It is not like that they think if they threaten us , we will give up our human right and definite right," Pezeshkian said. "We will not withdraw, we will not easily loose honourable military, scientific, nuclear in all fields."

The negotiations have reached the "expert" level, meaning the sides are trying to reach agreement on the details of a possible deal. But a major sticking point remains Iran's enrichment of uranium, which Tehran insists it must be allowed to do and the Trump administration increasingly insists the Islamic Republic must give up.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to unleash airstrikes targeting Iran's programme if a deal isn't reached. —*PTI*

Turkiye frees scribe convicted for 'insulting' Erdogan

STOCKHOLM, 17 MAY

A Swedish journalist arrested in Turkiye in March when he travelled there to cover nationwide protests was released and returned home to Sweden on Saturday. Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson wrote on X that "hard work in relative silence has paid off" and that Joakim Medin's release was due to intensive lobbying by the Swedish foreign ministry and European colleagues. "Welcome home Joakim!" Kristersson wrote on X. Last month, a Turkish court had convicted Medin of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Medin was given an 11-month suspended prison term, but initial reports said he would remain in custody awaiting the outcome of a separate trial on terrorism-related charges. Medin was detained on 27 March as he arrived at Istanbul airport to cover last month's nationwide protests. —*PTI*

INSIDE JOB SUSPECTED

10 inmates drill hole to breach New Orleans prison

NEW ORLEANS, 17 MAY

Ten men broke out of a New Orleans jail Friday in an audacious overnight escape by fleeing through a hole behind a toilet and scaling a wall while the lone guard assigned to their cell pod was away getting food, authorities said.

Seven of the escapees, including suspects charged with murder, remain on the lam following the breakout. The local sheriff says it may have been aided by members within the department.

Surveillance footage showed the escapees sprinting out of the facility – some wearing orange clothing and others in white. They scaled a fence, using blankets to avoid being cut by barbed wire, and sprinted across the nearby interstate and into a neighbourhood.

A photograph obtained by The Associated Press from law enforcement shows the opening behind a toilet. Above the hole are scrawled messages that include "To Easy LoL".

Their absence went unnoticed for hours. It was not until a routine morning headcount, more than seven hours later, that law enforcement learned of the escape.

One of the men, Kendall Myles, 20, was apprehended soon after following a brief foot chase through the French Quarter.

He had previously escaped twice from juvenile detention centres. By Friday evening, two more fugitives were captured. Officials found Robert Mood —*PTI*

Ten detainees, mostly men in their 20s, used an opening in a cell to flee the New Orleans Justice Center on Friday morning **PHOTO: X**

DPIIT partners with GEAPP to boost climate startups

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP) to support climate-tech startups in India. Announced by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the two-year partnership aims to promote innovation in clean energy and manufacturing. It will provide early-stage startups with funding, mentorship, pilot opportunities, and market linkages to help scale climate-focused solutions aligned with India's net-zero goals. As part of the initiative, GEAPP will launch the Energy Transitions Innovation Challenge (ENTICE), offering up to USD 500,000 in rewards for high-impact solutions. —*PTI*

Govt mulls digital platform for trade remedy probes

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

The government is developing a digital platform to enable electronic submission of documents in trade remedy investigations, aiming to boost transparency, efficiency, and ease of access for stakeholders, the commerce ministry said on Saturday. These investigations are conducted by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), a wing of the commerce ministry responsible for protecting domestic industries from unfair trade practices such as dumping and subsidies. Since 1995, India has launched over 1,200 trade remedy investigations, with recent actions safeguarding sectors like solar energy and advanced materials, including solar cells and copper wire rods. The upcoming platform, expected to go live soon, will streamline document submission and enhance participation in probes. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Dr Reddy's gets 2 notes from USFDA for NY API plant

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Saturday said the US regulator has issued a Form 483 with two observations after inspecting its US facility. The US Food and Drug Administration completed a Good Manufacturing Practice inspection at the company's active pharmaceutical ingredients facility in New York, Dr Reddy's said in a regulatory filing. The inspection was conducted during 12-16 May, 2025, it added. "We have been issued a Form 483 with two observations, which we will address within the stipulated timeline," the drug firm said. As per USFDA, Form 483 is issued to a firm's management at the conclusion of an inspection when the investigator has observed any conditions that may constitute violations of the Food Drug and Cosmetic (FD&C) Act and related Acts. —*PTI*

FPIs pump ₹4,452 cr into Indian equities this week

Total FPI investments in May so far stand at ₹18,620 crore

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY 2025

xxxx

PHOTO: X

- The surge in May builds on April's turnaround, when FPIs became net buyers after several months of outflows, investing Rs 4,223 crore. January and February witnessed significant sell-offs

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have made robust investments in Indian equities, bringing in Rs 4,452.3 crore between 13 and 16 May, according to data released by the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL). The sharpest inflow came on Friday, with net investments of Rs 5,746 crore. However, the trend was mixed during the week, as Tuesday saw a net outflow of Rs 2,388 crore, indicating intermittent profit booking or cautious sentiment.

With this, total FPI investments in May so far stand at Rs 18,620 crore, signalling renewed confidence in Indian markets. Analysts attribute this optimism to easing global concerns, steady domestic growth prospects, and positive expectations around the general election outcome.

The surge in May builds on April's turnaround, when FPIs became net buyers after several months of outflows, investing Rs 4,223 crore. In contrast, January and February witnessed significant sell-offs of Rs 78,027 crore and Rs 34,574 crore respectively, driven by global uncertainties and rising U.S. bond yields. March saw further outflows of Rs 3,973 crore. As a result, despite recent inflows, FPIs remain net sellers in 2025, with total outflows at Rs 93,731 crore year-to-date.

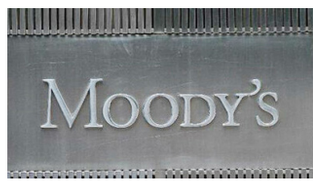
Meanwhile, Indian equity markets have rallied strongly. The benchmark Nifty index surged 4.2 per cent this week, while the Sensex rose by 2,875 points. All major sectoral indices traded in the green, with Defence, Capital Markets, and Realty stocks leading the gains—rising 17 per cent, 11.5 per cent, and 10.85 per cent, respectively.

The continued inflows, along with positive momentum in key sectors, suggest that foreign investors are regaining faith in the Indian economy. If the current trend sustains, it may mark a lasting reversal in FPI sentiment after a challenging start to the year. —*PTI*

FISCAL MISMANAGEMENT

Moody's strips US govt of top credit rating

WASHINGTON, 17 MAY



Moody's Ratings has stripped the United States government of its top-tier credit rating, downgrading it from Aaa to Aa1, citing chronic fiscal mismanagement and the federal government's inability to curb rising debt levels.

Though the downgrade ends the U.S.'s last remaining gold-standard rating among the three major agencies—Standard & Poor's downgraded the U.S. in 2011 and Fitch followed in 2023—Moody's acknowledged America's enduring economic strengths, including the size and resilience of its economy and the global dominance of the U.S. dollar.

In its statement, Moody's projected that federal deficits would widen significantly, rising from 6.4 per cent of GDP in 2024 to nearly 9 per cent by 2035. This trajectory, the agency noted, is being driven by soaring interest payments, rising entitlement spending, and weak revenue growth.

The extension of former President Donald Trump's 2017 tax cuts, a key priority of the Republican-controlled Congress, could add an estimated $4 trillion to the primary deficit over the next decade, according to Moody's. The primary deficit excludes interest payments on debt.

Efforts to address the crisis have been stalled by a deeply divided political landscape. Republicans oppose any tax hikes, while Democrats resist major spending cuts. —*PTI*

Gensol crisis deepens as CFO resigns

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

In a fresh blow to crisis-hit Gensol Engineering, Chief Financial Officer Jabir mahendi Mohammedraza Aga has resigned with immediate effect, just days after the exit of the company's promoter-directors.

In his resignation letter, filed with the stock exchanges, Aga cited intense regulatory scrutiny and internal disarray as key reasons for his departure. "The company is currently facing significant challenges, with multiple regulatory bodies conducting investigations and the top management resigning," he stated.

Aga added that poor coordination and disorganised data across departments have left Gensol ill-equipped to respond effectively to ongoing probes. "The immense pressure is affecting my physical and mental well-being, leading to a complete loss of focus," he said, calling his resignation a decision made in the company's best interest.

On 12 May, Gensol promoters Anmol Singh Jaggi (Managing Director) and Puneet Singh Jaggi (Wholetime Director) resigned following an interim order by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The regulator had barred them and Gensol from the securities market due to alleged fund diversion and governance failures. SEBI's 15 April order, prompted by a complaint received in June 2024, accused the Jaggi brothers of fraudulently diverting company funds for personal gain. The regulator also directed Gensol to suspend its proposed stock split and prohibited the Jaggi brothers from holding any director or key managerial roles in the firm until further notice.

With the CFO's exit, Gensol faces a deepening leadership vacuum as it grapples with regulatory investigations and mounting operational challenges. —*PTI*

Oil companies' LPG losses may fall 45%

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

- Household cooking accounts for about 90 per cent of India's LPG consumption, with the rest used in industrial and commercial sectors. Over the past decade, domestic LPG consumers have doubled to 33 crore as of 1 April, 2025

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) in India are likely to see a 45 per cent reduction in LPG-related losses in FY26 if crude oil prices remain stable at USD 65 per barrel, according to a report by CareEdge Ratings.

The report attributes this expected decline in under-recoveries to a combination of higher domestic retail LPG prices and falling international LPG prices. Under-recoveries occur when OMCs sell LPG cylinders below cost due to government price regulation aimed at keeping cooking gas affordable.

Household cooking accounts for about 90 per cent of India's LPG consumption, with the rest used in industrial and commercial sectors. Over the past decade, domestic LPG consumers have doubled to 33 crore as of 1 April, 2025, outpacing growth in domestic production. Consequently, reliance on imports has surged—60 per cent of LPG was imported in FY25, up from 46 per cent a decade ago.

In FY25, OMCs faced under-recoveries of Rs 220 per 14.2 kg cylinder, resulting in combined losses of Rs 41,270 crore and a sharp drop in their profit after tax from Rs 85,000 crore in FY24 to Rs 35,000 crore in FY25.

However, a Rs 50 retail price hike from April 8, 2025, and declining global LPG prices—led by recent drops in the Saudi Contract Price—are expected to reduce under-recoveries by a combined 45 per cent in FY26. —*ANI*

India to lead in shaping 6G technology regulations: Scindia

GWALIOR, 17 MAY

PHOTO: CHATGPT

Union Minister of Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia on Saturday said India will play a pivotal role in shaping global regulations for 6G technology, as the country continues to lead the telecommunication revolution under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Speaking on World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, Scindia noted that India has rapidly embraced 5G technology, reaching 82 per cent of the population across 99 per cent of districts within just 22 months.

"India will take the lead in tailoring the rules for 6G technology in the coming days," he said.

Highlighting advances in the postal sector, Scindia said new services are being introduced to enhance India Post, which operates one of the world's largest logistics networks with 1.64 lakh post offices and 2.5 lakh postal workers.

Recalling his previous role as Minister of State for Communications in the UPA government, Scindia shared that he designed the Department of Posts' logo in 2008 with the slogan 'Postal Service is Public Service', a principle still upheld by postal workers today.

Scindia also commented on the public boycott of Turkiye and Azerbaijan following their support for Pakistan during Operation Sindoor. "This is the will of the people. The nation comes first," he said. "Citizens have made this decision voluntarily. There will be no compromise on national interest and security."

World Telecommunication Day is observed annually on 17 May to raise awareness of the impact of digital technologies and to promote efforts to reduce the global digital divide. —*PTI*

Private capex grow at 19.8%

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

India's private capital expenditure grew at a strong 19.8 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) from FY21 to FY25E, driven by sectors like oil and gas, power, automobiles, and commodities, according to a report by HDFC Securities. Capex by the top 250 listed companies rose to ₹9.9 trillion in FY25E.

Bank credit growth remained muted. Central government capex also grew significantly at a 24.3 per cent CAGR, while state government capex lagged at 11.9 per cent. The report noted that companies used only 57 per cent of their operating cash flows for capex, avoiding added debt. —*ANI*

RBI may transfer record ₹3L cr dividend to govt

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is expected to transfer a record surplus dividend of Rs 2.7–3 lakh crore to the government in FY26, marking a nearly 50 per cent year-on-year increase, according to a report by SEBI-registered Front Wave Research.

This would surpass last year's historic Rs 2.1 lakh crore payout and is likely to be officially announced by late May. The expected surge stems from three key drivers.

Firstly, the RBI booked strong trading gains through timely forex operations, buying US dollars at Rs 83–84 and selling at Rs 84–87. Secondly, the central bank's over USD 600 billion in foreign exchange reserves earned higher interest income amid elevated global rates. Thirdly, strong domestic income from Open Market Operations (OMOs), bond holdings, and repo transactions further bolstered its balance sheet. The report said once disbursed and spent, this dividend could boost banking system liquidity to Rs 5.5–6 trillion, a sharp reversal from the current deficit. —*ANI*

AMID RISING MEDICAL COSTS

80% insured Indians unsure of health cover

MUMBAI, 17 MAY

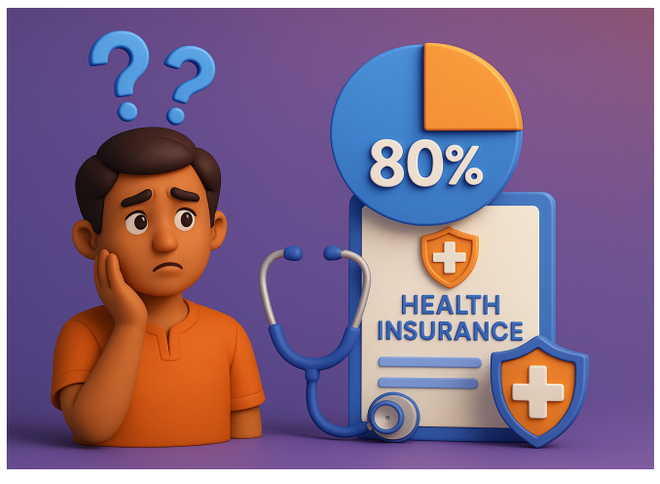


PHOTO: CHATGPT

- The survey revealed that two out of every three policyholders feel insecure and inadequately protected when faced with actual claims and unexpected bills

Over 80 per cent of insured individuals in India are uncertain about the adequacy of their health insurance coverage due to the steep rise in hospitalisation and medical expenses, according to a new survey by Future Generali India Insurance.

The survey, Health Unlimited, revealed that two out of every three policyholders feel insecure and inadequately protected when faced with actual claims and unexpected bills. A significant 90 per cent of respondents identified the "recharge of sum insured" feature as a critical benefit in their policies.

"This highlights the growing concern among people despite having health insurance," said Anup Rau, Managing Director and CEO of Future Generali India Insurance. "The rising cost of medical treatment is a major issue, and existing plans often fall short in times of real need."

The survey, conducted among 800 insured individuals aged 25 and above, pointed out that India had one of the highest medical inflation rates in Asia in 2021—approximately 14 per cent higher than countries like China, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

To address these concerns, the company has launched a new product, Health Unlimited, which offers unlimited restoration of the sum insured starting from the second claim. This ensures continuous coverage regardless of the number or cost of claims, offering policyholders financial security and peace of mind. —*PTI*

Jio tops data internet, call setup success rate in TRAI tests

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

Reliance Jio has emerged as the top performer in data internet speed and call setup success rate, while Bharti Airtel recorded the least call drops in the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (TRAI) latest drive tests conducted in March 2025. The independent tests assessed the quality of voice and data services offered by mobile operators across various highways, cities, rail routes, and coastal areas.

TRAI evaluated parameters such as call setup success rate, call drop rate (DCR), mean opinion score (MOS) for speech quality, voice packet drop rate, call silence rate, and coverage.

Jio stood out in all drive test routes for fastest call setup time, meaning it connected calls in the shortest duration. Along with Vodafone, Jio also showed high efficiency in call setup success rate across multiple routes.

Airtel delivered the best performance in call drop rates, outperforming peers on five out of seven test routes. Airtel also led in minimising call silence, further reinforcing its lead in voice quality.

In the data segment, Jio was found to be the fastest internet service provider for downloads across all test routes. It also led in upload speeds in five routes, while Airtel topped the other two. BSNL, however, lagged behind all other major operators and failed to lead in any of the tested parameters.

The tests were conducted by TRAI's appointed agency across diverse locations including Nagpur (Maharashtra), Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh East), Mumbai and Mumbai-Pune Expressway, Ambala (Haryana), Chennai and highway/rail routes to Coimbatore and Vijayawada (Tamil Nadu), Srinagar (Jammu & Kashmir), and Indore (Madhya Pradesh).

Operators tested included Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, and BSNL/MTNL, covering multiple technologies—2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G. —*ANI*

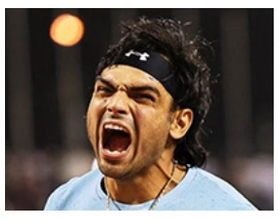


PHOTO: PTI

Neeraj Chopra says, he's aiming to throw farther now

DOHA, 17 MAY

Relieved, happy but a touch disappointed too, Indian javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra said now that he is done breaching the 90m mark, he would be striving to go farther as his body is more or less free of the niggles that plagued him in the past few years. The 27-year-old two-time Olympic medallist sent his spear to 90.23m in the Diamond League season-opener here on Friday but finished second overall after Germany's Julian Weber took the top spot with a 91.06m effort in his final throw. "I am very happy with the 90m mark, but it's a little bit of a bittersweet experience. But never mind, my coach (the legendary Jan) is still working on some aspects of my throw. "We started working together only in February this year. I am still learning things," Chopra said after the event.—*PTI*

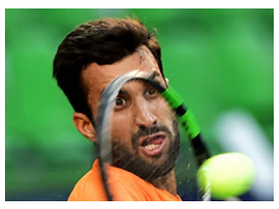


PHOTO: X

Bhambri and Galloway progress to semifinals

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

India's Yuki Bhambri and his American partner Robert Galloway moved into the semifinals of the Bordeaux Challenger with a straight-sets win over the unseeded French pair of Quentin Halys and Albano Olivetti, here Saturday. The second-seeded Indo-American combine registered a 7-5 6-3 win over their unseeded rivals in one hour and eight minutes. They will next take on third third-seeded Brazilians Rafael Matos and Marcelo Melo. India's other contenders have exited the tournament.—*PTI*

Delhi Grandmasters Open to begin on 7 June

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

Over 2,500 players from more than 15 countries, including 20 Grandmasters, will compete across three rating-based categories in the 21st edition of the Delhi International Open Grandmasters Chess Tournament, scheduled to be held here from 7 to 14 June. Organised by the Delhi Chess Association under the aegis of the All India Chess Federation, the tournament features a record prize pool of Rs 1.21 crore and is a marquee event on the FIDE World Championship Circuit.—*PTI*

Brazil soccer to pick new president

SAO PAULO, 17 MAY

The Brazilian Football Confederation will pick a new president shortly before it introduces Real Madrid's Carlo Ancelotti as the new national coach. CBF vice president Fernando Sarney, who was named by a judge as the caretaker president after Ednaldo Rodrigues was removed from office, announced on Friday that the vote will take place on 25 May, the same day as the last round of the Spanish league. When Rodrigues was in charge, Ancelotti was expected to arrive the next day at the CBF headquarters in Rio de Janeiro to announce his squad for two World Cup qualifiers against Ecuador and Paraguay in June.—*PTI*

Punjab eye playoff spot as RR seek pride

PBKS are comfortably placed at the third spot

JAIPUR, 17 MAY

Punjab Kings will look to renew their bid for a playoff berth with another commanding performance here on Sunday against Rajasthan Royals, who have failed to rise above mediocrity despite possessing the resources this season. As action returns to the Sawai Mansingh stadium after a week-long enforced break, Shreyas Iyer's side will hope to move past the nightmare on 8 May, when their match against Delhi Capitals in scenic Dharamsala had to be called off due to India-Pakistan border tensions, forcing the players to return to their dressing rooms in pitch darkness.

As PBKS take the field on Sunday, comfortably placed at third spot on the table with 15 points from 11 games, there would be some scepticism about the changes in the line-up owing to the enforced break. Though Australians Marcus Stonis and Josh Inglis have agreed to rejoin the team, they would be missing PBKS' first game post IPL resumption, forcing the Punjab side to potentially rejig their batting order. The absence of the tall South African pacer Marco Jansen, who has been called back by Cricket South Africa, would hurt Shreyas' side the most. He had made quite an impact this season, scalping 11 wickets. However, PBKS has a strong Indian core, including skipper Shreyas, opener Priyansh Arya, Prabhsimran Singh, and Nehal Wadhera. The side has come out relatively unscathed from the exodus of foreign players following the Indo-Pakistan tensions. —*PTI*

Shreyas Iyer and Sanju Samson PHOTO: PTI

RR VS PBKS

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	29
RR Won:	17
PBKS Won:	12

RR vs PBKS Match starts at **3.30 pm IST**

> Gill and Pant are ideal candidates to captain India in the Test format, already have the experience of leading IPL sides
>
> -Ravi Shastri, Former India coach

Struggling Delhi take on formidable GT

DC is currently on 13 points from 11 matches

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

Shaken by the abrupt suspension of their previous match due to the India-Pakistan conflict, a struggling Delhi Capitals will look to regroup and address bowling concerns when they face table-toppers Gujarat Titans in a reverse-leg IPL clash here on Sunday to keep their playoff hopes alive.

If three defeats and a no-result due to rain in their last five games weren't enough, DC's previous fixture was called off midway following air raid alerts in neighbouring Jammu and Pathankot, prompting a week-long suspension of the league.

DC, currently just outside the top four with 13 points from 11 matches, suffered a major setback with premier pacer Mitchell Starc deciding not to return for the remainder of the season. The Australian left-armer is the team's leading wicket-taker with 14 scalps, and his absence is a significant blow to DC's already slim playoff hopes.

In a bit of relief, the Capitals managed to secure the services of Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who obtained the 'No Objection Certificate' from his national board on Friday.

When the two teams last met on April 19, DC were blown away by Jos Buttler's 97 off 54 balls as GT chased down a 200-plus total with ease to win by seven wickets.

KL Rahul and Jos Buttler PHOTO: PTI

DC's problems have only deepened in recent outings. Their top and middle-order crumbled against Sunrisers Hyderabad in a rain-hit match, while their bowlers were hammered by Punjab Kings, who raced to 122 for one in just 10.1 overs before the game in Dharamsala was abandoned. —*PTI*

> Virat Kohli will always be "Cheeku" to those who grew up with him, reflecting on the friendship that dates back to their early days in Delhi cricket
>
> -RIshant Sharma, Indian pacer

DC VS GT

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	6
LSG Won:	3
SRH Won:	3

DC vs GT Match starts at **7.30 pm IST**

HI announces 24-member Indian junior women's team

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

Goalkeeper Nidhi has been named captain, while Hina Bano will serve as her deputy, as Hockey India on Saturday announced a 24-member Indian junior women's team for the upcoming Four Nations Tournament in Rosario, Argentina.

Scheduled to be held from May 25 to June 2, the tournament will feature four countries: Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and India.

As part of their preparation for the Junior World Cup in December, the Indian team will play two matches against each of the participating nations to evaluate their performance, assess team combinations, and refine strategies. "We are looking to identify our best players from this squad, especially with the Junior World Cup just six months away. This tour will provide valuable international exposure and experience for the players," Indian Junior Women's hockey team coach Tushar Khandker said in a release. —*PTI*

ITALIAN OPEN 2025

Sinner to take on Alcaraz in titular clash

ROME, 17 MAY

Jannik Sinner survived a slow start and a major scare on Friday at the Internazionali BNL d'Italia, where he rallied past Tommy Paul 1-6, 6-0, 6-3 to set a final meeting with Carlos Alcaraz on his return to the Tour in Rome.

Just 24 hours after dismantling Casper Ruud 6-0, 6-1 in the quarter-finals, Sinner looked surprisingly out of sync in the opening set against Paul.

The Italian could not breach the defences of the American, who forced the World No. 1 into uncharacteristic errors with his depth, silencing the Italian crowd inside Campo Centrale.

But champions don't fade; they fight. And Sinner, riding a 25-match winning streak, wasn't about to back down.

Digging deep, the 23-year-old tightened up his game, cut down the errors, and began stepping inside the baseline to dictate the rallies. With the momentum shifting, the Roman air filled with energy as chants of "Olé, Olé, Olé, Sinner!" echoed through the stands."I just tried to stay there mentally," Sinner said. "Today, the conditions were different.

It was much colder, heavier. I struggled with that a little bit, and he broke me straight away.

I tried to stay there, mentally, and what might work better. I stayed there in the first set. Winning the one game was very important.

Jasmine Paolini beat Coco Gauff

Paolini earned her first win over Gauff with a 6–4, 6–3 victory on indoor clay at the WTA 500 event. —*PTI*

RCB vs KKR: match abandoned

Royal Challengers Bengaluru moved a step closer to the IPL playoffs, while defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders were knocked out of the race as incessant rain washed out their match here on Saturday, forcing the teams to settle for a point apiece. Rain of varying intensity that started around 6 pm never relented as even the toss could not take place, and the officials eventually called off the game at 10.24 pm. —*PTI*

Noah returns to action at South African Safari

SUN CITY, 17 MAY

Indian bike rider Harith Noah will return to competitive racing after four months when he participates in the inaugural South African Safari Rally, which is Round 3 of the FIA FIM World Rally-Raid Championship, beginning Sunday.

Noah was forced to exit Dakar 2025, in which a crash left him with a fractured wrist. "After Dakar, I needed time to recover from the injury, but everything went well and I'm back to full fitness now. This is my first race since the crash, so there are some nerves, which is normal," said Noah. "But the South African Safari Rally is a new challenge for everyone; the route is unfamiliar territory across the board. The key is to stay calm, get used to the bike again, and take it one kilometre at a time," added Noah. South African Safari Rally brings the W2RC to South Africa for the first time, and with extreme terrains and rapidly changing climates, it is tipped to be a standout fixture on the W2RC calendar. The 2025 W2RC season features five rounds across three continents, pushing riders through a wide spectrum of terrains and conditions. The year kicked off with the legendary Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia, followed by the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge.

Heavy crash for Yuki Tsunoda interrupts qualifying for F1 Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix

Yuki Tsunoda went to the medical center after he crashed heavily in qualifying for Formula 1's Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix on Saturday, bringing out the red flag. —*PTI*

TT Worlds: Sreeja loses but India tastes success in doubles

DOHA, 17 MAY

India number one Sreeja Akula crashed out in the first round, but the Mukherjee sisters Ayhika and Sutirtha and the duo of Diya Chitale and Yashaswini Ghodpade won their respective women's doubles opening matches in the table tennis World Championships here on Saturday.

The Indian pair of Manav Thakkar and Manush Shah too tasted success in their first round men's doubles match in the premier tournament.An error-prone Akula lost to Thailand's Suthasini Sawettabut 1-4 (11-9 8-11 6-11 5-11 2-11) rather tamely.It was a disappointing outing for the Indian as she made an early exit after losing to the world number 84. Sreeja won the opening game, but after that, lost her momentum, dropping innumerable points and making unforced errors to go down in just 33 minutes.

The Indian contingent, though, had moments to cheer as Asian Games medallists Ayhika and Sutirtha beat the Turkish pair of Ozge Yilmaz and Ece Harac 3-2 (4-11, 11-9, 10-1,2, 11-,9 11-7) following a five-game thriller.

The result meant that the Indian pair ended a six-match losing streak while progressing to the next round of the ITTF World Championships. —*PTI*

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE HOPES

Aston Villa and Chelsea win at home

BIRMINGHAM, 17 MAY

Aston Villa and Chelsea won home games and strengthened their hopes for a top-five Premier League finish and a place in next year's Champions League. Ezri Konsa and Boubacar Kamara scored and gave Villa a 2-0 win over an under-strength Tottenham Hotspur, and Chelsea overcame a stuffy Manchester United 1-0 thanks to a second-half goal from Marc Cucurella.

The result left Chelsea in fourth with 66 points, and Villa in fifth on goal difference. The other teams fighting for one of the four Champions League spots after league winner Liverpool all have two games left to play.

Arsenal has 68 points, Newcastle 66, Manchester City 65, and Nottingham Forest 62.

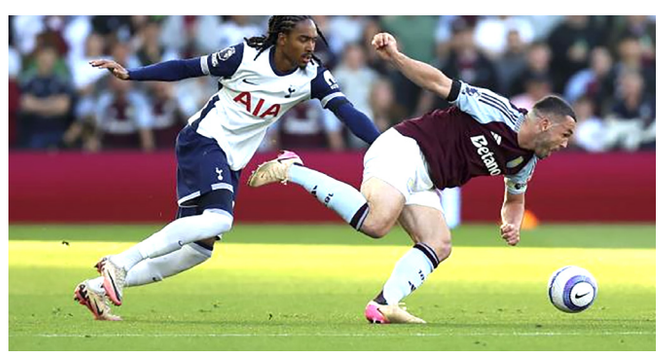
On a tense night at Villa Park, the home side had the better of the play but was forced to wait until the 59th minute to get the opener.

Ollie Watkins steered John McGinn's corner back across the goal, and an unmarked Ezri Konsa turned in the ball.

Boubacar Kamara doubled the lead with a low drive from the edge of the penalty area. It was his first Premier League goal in his 69th game.

"We knew today was a must-win," the Frenchman told broadcaster Sky Sports. "We want to play Champions League football again. We had a taste of it this season, and we as players, it's a competition you want to play in."

Villa's final match is against Man United at Old Trafford on 25 May. —*PTI*



Aston Villa's John McGinn, right, and Tottenham Hotspur's Djed Spence battle for the ball during the match between Aston Villa and Tottenham Hotspur PHOTO: PTI

Indian juniors brace up for year's first WC in Suhl

NEW DELHI, 17 MAY

A first batch of 40 Indian shooters and support staff will leave for the blue-riband event of the junior international shooting calendar, the ISSF World Cup, in Suhl, Germany, on Saturday.

India's women pistol shooters have made it five gold out of five after the trio of Manu Bhaker, Esha Singh and Rhythm Sangwan trounced hosts Germany 16-2 in the 25m pistol team final at the ISSF Junior World Cup in Suhl.

The official arrivals are scheduled for 19 May, while competitions begin from 20 May and will conclude on 26 May.India, who finished on top in two of the three ISSF junior events last year, have fielded the largest contingent of 57 shooters, who will be accompanied by 21 officials, including coaches and support staff.A second batch of 38 members (28 shooters and 10 support staff) will leave for Germany on Sunday.Suhl, a small city with around 40,000 residents right in the centre of Germany, has long been the driving force of the junior international shooting circuit and attracts the best of the future stars in the sport.—*PTI*